Chimalpahin's Conquest

A Nahua Historian's Rewriting of Francisco López de Gómara's *La conquista de México*

Edited and Translated by

Susan Schroeder

Anne J. Cruz

Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera

David E. Tavárez

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SERIES CHIMALPAHIN

Susan Schroeder, *General Editor*

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Chimalpahin's Conquest

INTRODUCTION

I.
The History of Chimalpahin's "Conquista" Manuscript

Susan Schroeder

In 1552 the historian Francisco López de Gómara (1511–c. 1559) published his monumental *Historia de las Indias y Conquista de México*.[1] The book was an instant success, and five additional Spanish-language editions were published over the course of the next five years, as well as numerous translations. López de Gómara knew Hernando Cortés (1482–1547) well, reportedly served as his priest for a time, and can be considered his biographer. *La conquista* is a recounting of the circumstances of Cortés's birth, the travails he experienced as a young man in Medellín and later in Seville as he waited to set sail for Santo Domingo, and his activities, including his marriage, while living in Cuba. By far the greatest detail, however, is devoted to the conqueror's exploits as he explored the land that he eventually named New Spain, his negotiations with local peoples, and his inexorable march toward and defeat of Mexico Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec empire. López de Gómara aimed to furnish the best of all insight into the thought and will of the great captain and included, purportedly verbatim, the eloquent speeches that Cortés made to rally his men and exalt the glory of imperial Spain and their Christian mission. Cortés was inevitably Gómara's hero.

However, in the interest of maintaining stability in the colonies, Prince Philip of Spain came to be concerned about the tone of the portrayal of Cortés and the other conquerors of New Spain, and in 1553 the Council of the Indies ordered the suppression of the printing and sale of the book. In 1566, as King Philip II, he prohibited its reading in Castile and in the Americas and imposed large fines for infringement of this order.[2] Nevertheless, the censorship did little to prevent the work from being shipped to the colonies and read by the inhabitants of New Spain and even indigenous

peoples in Mexico City. It warrants noting that, by 1573, the use of the term *conquista* was prohibited, although the term continued to be used by some Spanish authors.[3] To date, there is no evidence of its use as a loanword in any native-authored, native-language text in the Americas.[4]

At some point, *La conquista* fell into the hands of the seventeenth-century Nahua historian Chimalpahin (b. 1579), who lived and worked at the church of San Antonio Abad in the district of Xoloco, site of the famous first encounter of the conqueror Hernando Cortés and Emperor Moteuczoma Xocoyotl, "the younger." Chimalpahin is best known for his epic histories of Indian Mexico in the Nahuatl language, but he occasionally worked with Latin- and Spanish-language documents as well. His histories represent the most comprehensive extant corpus of the history of Indian Mexico written by a known indigenous author in his own language. Chimalpahin had access to an extraordinary collection of ancient pictorial manuscripts; writings in alphabetic Nahuatl, his native language; and published books in Spanish and Latin. Moreover, because he was located in Mexico City, he was able to furnish copious firsthand reports on the contemporary goings-on in the capital. Chimalpahin's histories are therefore invaluable, as they provide a unique, indigenous perspective on life in the colony.

Chimalpahin took it upon himself to make a copy of López de Gómara's great tome. It is said that he also translated the work into Nahuatl, but the whereabouts of that manuscript are unknown. He did transcribe the Spanish book, and as he copied it he deleted and corrected portions and interpolated abundant information about the Nahuas, as if he felt there was much more to the story of the conquest than had been told. As such, then, his work constitutes a major contribution to the New Conquest History genre.[5]

Chimalpahin was writing his histories exactly one hundred years after the Spanish invasion, thus he had not only a temporal advantage but also a material bounty of Spanish- and Nahuatl-language colonial accounts to draw upon. In and around Mexico City, Spaniards—particularly fray Bernardino de Sahagún—collected Tlatelolca histories of the conquest, and mestizo and Nahua authors wrote massive tomes about key actors and events that either preceded the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan or related their home regions' participation in it. All wrote with an agenda—to exalt the contributions of their own people and towns.[6] Best known are Chimalpahin's contemporaries, don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl of Tetzcoco and don Hernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc of Mexico Tenochtitlan. Both men were highly esteemed in their respective communities, and both wrote major historical works in Spanish.[7] It is believed that Alvarado Tezozomoc also wrote in Nahuatl, but

what is extant in that language is known only from writings by Chimalpahin.[8] Of unique and particular importance to this study is the entrance of a seventeenth-century Nahua intellectual into a sixteenth-century Hispanic conquest literary tradition, and his successful manipulation of that genre.

BACKGROUND OF THIS VOLUME

In December 1986 the late Michael Meyer, then director of the Latin American Area Center at the University of Arizona, telephoned me to say that in front of him, on his desk, was a manuscript entitled "La conquista de México" by don Domingo de San Antón Muñón [Chimalpahin] Quauhtlehuanitzin. I was astonished because it had been close to one hundred years since the work was last seen. It seems that a family physician in Yuma, Arizona, Ellis Browning, had for many years been in possession of the manuscript and was presently in Meyer's office to determine its value or, at the least, to have it translated into English.[9] I eventually met Dr. Browning, examined the manuscript, and determined that it was Chimalpahin's version of Francisco López de Gómara's grand opus of the same title that was published in Spain in 1552.[10] I confess my disappointment on seeing that it was not written in Nahuatl or even in Chimalpahin's hand but was instead an eighteenth-century copy. Subsequent research determined unequivocally that it was the copy made by Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci, who listed it in his 1746 catalog.[11] The manuscript was loaned to me, and I transcribed the entire work in typescript. Dr. Browning donated the manuscript to the Newberry Library in 1991.

Some fifteen years elapsed before I was able to return to Chimalpahin's "Conquista" manuscript. The occasion was a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship at the Newberry Library in 2000, to research the Spanish conquest of Mexico and the manuscript itself. In the course of that fellowship year I fortuitously met Anne Cruz, whose interest is the Golden Age literature of Spain. She, in turn, introduced me to Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera, whose specialty is the life and writings of Francisco López de Gómara. Suddenly, I had the makings of a translation team. I was already acquainted with David Tavárez, who is known for his work on Nahua and Zapotec peoples in colonial Mesoamerica, and I invited him to join the project. Cruz, Roa-de-la-Carrera, and Tavárez are native Spanish speakers, and all three possess the scholarly expertise that was needed to realize the translation of the manuscript into English. In 2005, we were awarded an NEH Collaborative Translation Grant, and we began working on the translation at the Newberry Library that July.

We subsequently met in Chicago for one month during each of the next two years. The opportunity to bring to light Chimalpahin's abundant emendations to López de Gómara's text has been an arduous, but highly rewarding, undertaking. Although this work by Chimalpahin is known to some scholars, it has been dismissed for it was believed that he had done little more than add a list of Indians and sign his name. Doubtless, we will never know how it was that Chimalpahin came to make a copy of *La conquista*. There is good evidence that he worked at least part time as a copyist of Nahuatl pictorial and alphabetical texts while living in Mexico City (1593–c. 1624). Presumably, his interest was in providing a comprehensive history of Indian Mexico so that future generations of Nahuas would know of their glorious past. As noted above, López de Gómara's book was forbidden reading in New Spain, yet we are certain that at least one copy was shipped there in 1600.[12] Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera discusses the life and works of López de Gómara in his introduction below. We know that the mestizo historian Alva Ixtlilxochitl, a contemporary of Chimalpahin, possessed a copy of *La conquista* and declared it to be the best account of the conquest that he had seen.[13] But how did the book come into Chimalpahin's possession? He does not say; indeed, there is no record that he ever mentioned having read it, much less going to the trouble of making a copy. Did he translate it into Nahuatl, as the nineteenth-century historian and politician don Carlos María de Bustamante so assiduously asserts? Was it his purpose to write the history of the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan from the indigenous perspective?

CONVENTIONS

By all the evidence, Chimalpahin intended to make an exact copy of *La conquista*. Otherwise, he would have corrected the egregious Spanish phonetic spellings of Nahuatl personal and place names, among other things. We are quite certain which of the six editions published in Spain (1552–1557) he had access to, after Roa-de-la-Carrera's careful comparison of them. In truth, there are relatively few differences in the various editions,[14] and we are confident that he used either the original 1552 or the 1553 edition. We have thus opted for the 1552 work as our copy text for comparison with Chimalpahin's manuscript. We adhere to Chimalpahin's intention to furnish a full account of López de Gómara's book. In the course of copying the book, Chimalpahin inadvertently omitted two folios (1552, ff. xix, xx). We have translated the missing folios and include them in our text, enclosed in brackets, to maintain continuity

of the history. In addition, while López de Gómara used chapter titles, Chimalpahin numbered the chapters, but not all of them, and he omitted an occasional title altogether and added a couple of his own. Another marked difference is Chimalpahin's use of parentheses, which are familiar in his Nahuatl annals. Most often, his parenthetical comments are direct quotes from López de Gómara, although the latter rarely, if ever, used parentheses. Chimalpahin also commonly posed questions in his histories and punctuated them with question marks. Yet these, like parentheses, are stylistic features that appear sparingly in López de Gómara's published book. As he famously did in all his other writings, Chimalpahin signed his name in the text as he made his emendations. All such additions are characteristic of the Chimalpahin canon.

However, conspicuously absent in the eighteenth-century copy we worked from are the scholia that would typically fill the blank spaces between the lines and in the margins of an original, handwritten version. We can nevertheless imagine Chimalpahin's densely scripted holograph. His additions are numerous and usually pertinent, and they ultimately enhance our understanding of his particular perspective of the Spanish invasion. And, despite the "editing" nature of most of his interpolations, we are reminded of his eloquence as a Nahua historian when he laments the loss of five hundred Mexica during the final siege, describing the men as "the flower of Tlatelolco" (f. 116). Yet he is seemingly capricious in his description of the natives of Tabasco, remarking that "they were such simpletons" when they gave flowers and turkeys to the Spaniards' horses to eat (f. 17).

Mention should also be made of Boturini's copyist, who presumably made an exact transcription of Chimalpahin's manuscript. Occasional copyist errors are apparent, such as inconsistencies in the spelling of certain terms. When an error was obvious and easy to correct, we have done so in the text without comment. When it was not so easily resolved, we have consulted other sources and explained the action or answered the question in a note. We cannot be absolutely certain who it was that omitted the two folios from the original book, Chimalpahin or the copyist, but all subsequent copies of Chimalpahin's manuscript are missing the same two folios. In keeping with Chimalpahin's style—and to avoid López de Gómara's repeated use of *yndios* in his many references to native peoples of a given polity, such as the *Mexicanos* of Mexico Tenochtitlan—we have substituted the Nahuatl plural endings (without the glottal stops) *-ca*, *-teca*, and *-que*. Hence, *Mexica* for *Mexicano*, *Chololteca* for *Cholulanos*, and *Colhuaque* for *Culhuas*. We have attempted to identify and explain or to correct ambiguities on the parts of López de Gómara and Chimalpahin, when possible, in relevant notes.

An example is López de Gómara's, or perhaps Hernando Cortés's, habit of confusing the native *altepetl*, "kingdom or ethnic state," of Colhuacan with Acolhuacan (generally known as Tetzcoco), or sometimes using Colhuacan interchangeably with Coyoacan (yet another altepetl), and even mistaking Colhuacan for Culiacan (a different polity altogether). Chimalpahin usually caught the errors and corrected them, but not always. In most instances, we have standardized the spellings of Nahuatl place and personal names, following the Nahuatl lexicon, except when a spelling has changed significantly and the modern form is readily familiar—for example, Cuernavaca for Quauhnahuac, and Oaxaca for Huaxacac. Many Spanish-language terms are specific to their institutions, places, and dates, and we have retained these in the translation after defining them when they first appear. We also have compiled a glossary with English translations of all the foreign terms that appear repeatedly in this work. López de Gómara frequently used more than one spelling for particular places and personal names. On the first appearance of each variation, we have retained his spelling in the translation, corrected it in a note, when possible, and used the standard spelling thereafter.

The Aztec capital at the time of the Spanish invasion was Mexico Tenochtitlan, but early on, López de Gómara referred to it as México (for greater Mexico City), and Chimalpahin let it stand. Another error that Chimalpahin glossed over is López de Gómara's use of Nahuatl place names as individually titled personal names, stating that a certain lord was called Tabasco (f. 18), and referring to a Lord Iztacmixtitlan (f. 34v), even when they are obviously the names of locales, judging by the locative endings. In one instance Chimalpahin adds "Lord" (before "Chinantla"; f. 106v) to indicate that a person was being referred to rather than a place. In his Nahuatl histories, Chimalpahin was fastidious about such details, and he was nearly obsessive about rank, office, title, reverentials, and correct spellings, as discussed below by David Tavárez. Additionally, several of Chimalpahin's manuscripts are unfinished, often breaking off in midsentence. All totaled, López de Gómara's book contains 252 chapters. In Chimalpahin's version, Chapter 229, "On Judges and Laws,"[15] had barely begun when the narrative abruptly ends.

As noted, Chimalpahin's "Conquista" manuscript is an amalgam of authorial voices and editorial practices. Moreover, because we were working from an eighteenth-century copy rather than from Chimalpahin's original holograph, we had to contend with an additional layer of mediation provided by a copyist who may have contributed his own misreadings or inaccuracies. The following are some of the theoretical and linguistic assumptions that we made as translators in order to convey the complexity of the manuscript into English.

One of the first tasks was to generate an accurate transcription of the Spanish-language manuscript. Roa-de-la-Carrera edited and revised my transcription and performed painstaking multiple checks, which were supplemented by on-the-spot verifications by Tavárez and Cruz. Next, we addressed two broad historical and linguistic questions: first, how did the structure and composition of the manuscript differ from that of its putative source, López de Gómara's 1552 edition? A meticulous, word-by-word comparison of the eighteenth-century manuscript, again by Roa-de-la-Carrera, yielded a number of significant differences, which we noted in our transcription of the manuscript by using regular typeface for all the words found both in the aforementioned López de Gómara edition and in the Chimalpahin manuscript, **boldface** for the words and phrases found only in Chimalpahin, and [brackets] around text prefaced by "LdeG:" for those found in López de Gómara but not in Chimalpahin. When certain phrases in Chimalpahin seemed to be glosses but not exact renderings of phrases found in López de Gómara, they were included in the text in brackets. When those phrases seemed to intrude upon the legibility of the narrative as a whole, they were put in footnotes. A third purpose for brackets is to identify names of subjects and objects where C.'s and LdeG's use of pronouns may be ambiguous.

We approached the project with the expectation that we would find a marked contrast in terms of syntax, language registers, word choices, use of colloquial expressions, and use of honorifics and titles between López de Gómara and Chimalpahin. Our observations have been consistent with this key assumption, and, as mentioned, we have been able to identify a few errors that were surely introduced by the eighteenth-century copyist. Our collaboration has yielded a Spanish-language edited transcription that highlights these crucial differences throughout the text.

The second major issue that we faced was how to convey both the semantic content of the "Conquista" manuscript and its peculiar structure into scholarly but accessible twenty-first-century North American English. In his celebrated essay, "The Task of the Translator," Walter Benjamin asserts that "the language of a translation can—in fact, must—let itself go so that it gives voice to the *intentio* of the original, not as reproduction but as harmony, as a supplement to the language in which it expresses itself, as its own kind of *intentio*."[16] Benjamin, who also regards transparency as the cardinal virtue of translation, would perhaps have been baffled both by Chimalpahin's text and by our efforts. Nevertheless, we have found useful his suggestion that one must depart from one form of linguistic intention in the original and seek to arrive at a separate, well-formed intentionality in the language into which one is translating. Therefore, our first and foremost objective as translators has

been to render the hybrid structure of the text—López de Gómara's narrative and Chimalpahin's emendations—as possessing its own particular intentionality in English. We have regarded other effects that a translator may see, such as clarity, aesthetic, impact, originality, and voice, as tools for achieving this task.

An example is our translation of the final sentence of Cortés's oration to his men after the capture of Tzompantzinco, when some Spaniards begin to abandon their resolve to march to the great capital, Mexico Tenochtitlan (f. 40v). In the following transcription of the original Spanish text, we use boldface type to highlight Chimalpahin's additions to the 1552 López de Gómara edition, and brackets to indicate wording that he chose to delete.

Venzereis tanbien con aiuda de Dios y con Vuestro esfuerzo los que de estos mas quedan que **ya** no pueden ser muchos y **mas** los **que son** de Culhua que no son mejores, **asi que pues hasta agora nos estamos en pie nadie se acuerde, ni desmaieis, y si** [LdeG: si no desmayais y] me seguis **con la gran confianza de todos nuestros Amigos y Compañeros sera Dios con nos Amen**.

It was rendered into English as:

With God's help and through your own efforts, you will defeat all those remaining, who should not be many in number **now**, as well as the Colhuaque, who are no better than the rest. **And since until now we are still standing**, let us not **falter or** faint, **for** if you follow me **with the great trust of all our friends and companions, God will be with us. Amen**.

The bilingual reader will note that the multiple clauses contained within one long sentence and divided by commas in the original version have been reconfigured into two shorter sentences in the English version. Our lexical choices sought to reflect the tone of the oration, which manages to be concise and eloquent and avoids the use of unusual words; it is, after all, a text that was written to be read both privately and before audiences that contained illiterate individuals. A great deal of deliberation went into the ways in which the text in regular typeface (common to both López de Gómara and Chimalpahin) interweaves with the bold typeface (Chimalpahin's additions) in our translation. We trust that the final product can be read at a glance by the casual reader, while at the same time rendering highly visible the density and content of Chimalpahin's additions and subtractions for the more determined reader. Moreover, we made a number of choices that improve legibility without sacrificing the apparent intention behind Chimalpahin's additions. Thus, the sentence section "que **ya** no pueden ser muchos y **mas** los **que** son de Culhua que no son mejores," which features three words added by Chimalpahin, has been rendered as "who should not be many

in number **now**, as well as the Colhuaque, who are no better than the rest." This translation takes into account Chimalpahin's addition of the indexical "**ya**" (now), but chooses to overlook the verb repetition in "**que** son/que no son." Moreover, Chimalpahin's addition, "**desmaieis**," in the subjunctive mood, is treated as an equivalent to "desmayais," the indicative conditional form originally used by López de Gómara. These two minor departures from an absolutely literal translation improve, in our view, the oration's readability. The remaining additions in this sentence are translated in a more literal manner, recognizing that the coordinated clause "let us not **falter or** faint" was a deliberate stylistic and rhetorical modification introduced by Chimalpahin, which serves to illustrate the balance between literal translation and overall legibility that we strove to achieve throughout the translation. Additionally, we have tended to divide the text into more manageable paragraphs with somewhat shorter sentences. Whenever possible, however, we have preferred to leave the sentences their original lengths so that readers can experience the full flavor of the sixteenth-century narrative.

REFERENCE WORKS

We acknowledge and greatly appreciate Lesley Byrd Simpson's pioneering a modern English translation of López de Gómara's *La conquista de México*, published in 1964.[17] Indeed, as if it were not enough of an endeavor in its own right, it appears that Simpson was simultaneously working on a translation of Robert Ricard's *Conquista Espiritual*.[18] Both conquest works, obviously, were major contributions to the historiography of sixteenth-century colonial Mesoamerica. And as far as can be determined, Simpson's translation of Ricard's book is exact and complete. However, he had a different, somewhat draconian (we feel) approach to translating and editing López de Gómara. First and foremost, Simpson omitted all forty-nine chapters (200–248) about native society and culture. Second, his approach is less literal than ours, and his version is considerably abridged—doubtless the result of his aim to provide a modern and accessible English-language account of López de Gómara's sixteenth-century Spanish chronicle. It proved to be a handy, popular edition with a wide readership for many years, but it has been out of print for a long time.

We have, of course, consulted the Simpson edition when challenged by troublesome terms or concepts in order to corroborate our own findings. His facility in Spanish and his knowledge of New Spain afforded us no end of reassurance. We also had abundant access to Peter Gerhard's

encyclopedic three-volume work on New Spanish geography (1972, 1979, 1982)[19] and Hugh Thomas's resourceful *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico* (1993) and his *Who's Who of the Conquistadors* (2000).[20] These works greatly facilitated our research and improved the present translation considerably, and we used them to identify as many key figures and places in the narrative as were relevant and possible. We have also availed ourselves of other primary sources and consulted numerous Spanish and Nahuatl dictionaries and grammars to define puzzling terminology and clarify problematic phrasing.

ABOUT THE MANUSCRIPT

The earliest published notice of Chimalpahin's "Conquista" manuscript is in Boturini's 1746 catalog of his Museo. Boturini noted: "Another history of the Conquest, its author is don Domingo de San Antón Chimalpahin [Quauhtlehuanitzin]. It is a complete, polished, and extensive work. Vol. 20, in folio size. Original."[21] In the earlier (1743) version of his catalog, Boturini was even more explicit: "Another folio-size manuscript volume in Spanish. It is about the conquest in general terms, and also about the conquest of Mexico [Tenochtitlan], and was copied from the original. Its author is D. Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin, an indigenous *cacique*, "leader," and it has one hundred and seventy-two folios."[22] Boturini compiled his catalog the same year he was arrested, imprisoned, and sent to Spain. His collection of antiquities was purportedly held by the government and then, from 1771 to 1788, housed in the library of the Royal University. But many of the books and manuscripts were dispersed. Moreover, the Spanish crown ordered that all the materials in the Boturini collection were to be sent to Spain, and in the 1790s a delegation of officials was sent to Mexico City for that purpose. Copies of the many manuscripts were made by creoles, and eventually there were at least six copies of Chimalpahin's "Conquista" manuscript.[23]

Some of the Boturini manuscripts were sold and taken to England and France; others were collected by creole bibliophiles, who used them as the basis for writing often profound treatises in response to disparaging philosophical and political attacks from Europe and the United States.[24] Chimalpahin's writings were among those cited most frequently. By the nineteenth century, however, New Spanish creoles turned their attention to matters more pressing on the homefront, namely, the colony's independence from Spain. The creole historian, lawyer, and politician don Carlos María de Bustamante (1774–1848) was an ardent supporter of the

independence movement and devoted considerable time to promoting the glories of Mexico's indigenous past (as compared to its infamous colonial era). To do so, he began to publish the manuscripts of Alva Ixtlilxochitl, Alvarado Tezozomoc, Sahagún, and many others—Chimalpahin among them. He stated that Chimalpahin's "Conquista" manuscript had fallen into his hands as well as a Nahuatl translation of it also written by Chimalpahin. He added that he had the manuscript translated back into Spanish and published it in two volumes in 1826.[25] The work, like so many of Bustamante's publications, was deeply flawed; among other errors, he has Chimalpahin's name wrong on the title page. Nevertheless, in publishing the manuscripts, Bustamante saved them for posterity and ensured Mexico's patrimony. He claimed that he was publishing the ancient works for the benefit of Mexico's youth, since "we have so few good books."[26] Among Bustamante's private papers is a receipt for the sale of a manuscript about the conquest.[27] The historian Alfredo Chavero (1841–1906) claimed to have owned the Bustamante copy of Chimalpahin's manuscript—although Chavero also claimed not to believe that Chimalpahin existed.[28] The anthropologist Nicolás León (1859–1929) seems to have been the last to be in possession of the manuscript, writing on the final folio, "This was the MS don Carlos María de Bustamante published with a thousand errors and in great disarray as 'Historia de las Conquistas de Hernando Cortés, escritas en español por Francisco López de Gómara' [History of the Conquests of Hernando Cortés, written in Spanish by Francisco López de Gómara], &c &c México, 1826, 2 volumes. In quarto, N. León." There is no further notice of "Conquista" until 1986.

The Browning Manuscript (Vault Folio Case Ms 5011) is housed at the Newberry Library, Chicago. It is bound in mission binding in coarse, limp vellum with ties, with five stitches in the front and back securing the spine. The lettering on the spine is difficult to read: "C llo(?) Conquista d. Mex." Front and back pastedowns display printer's waste from a work entitled *El peregrino septentrional atlante: delineado en la exemplarissima vida del venerable padre F. Antonio Margil de Jesús*, escribela el P. Fr. Isidro Felis de Espinosa. México: Joseph Bernardo de Hogal, 1737, with watermarks similar to those on some of the manuscript's leaves. The date of the publication suggests that Boturini himself had the manuscript bound. Preceding the first folio is a torn page that appears to have been written by Boturini: "Nota Bene: The author of this Conquista is don Domingo de S. Anton Muñon Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, who was alive in the year 1620, as attested by another original Mexican historical manuscript that I have almost finished [copying], which I suppose was written by this same author . . ." The manuscript numbers 172 folios and is written in brown ink in the same eighteenth-century script

throughout, although the title is in a different hand and ink and appears to have been added later. Marginalia in a variety of hands are present, although scholar John Glass believes that one of these may well be that of Boturini. The marginalia have not been included in this English translation but will appear in the critical Spanish transcription edition, with commentary by Roa-de-la-Carrera. The Spanish transcription of Chimalpahin's manuscript will be published in Mexico City by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

It has been a privilege to translate Francisco López de Gómara's great history and to identify, research, and come to understand Chimalpahin's many modifications to what has always been a remarkable but very Spanish version of the conquest of Mexico. Chimalpahin's emendations furnishing his Nahua perspective are indeed important, and they enable the reader to appreciate what concerned him most about López de Gómara's book. We sincerely wish that we had his Nahuatl translation of the same text for comparison as well as, doubtless, an even greater abundance of information about Nahua life. Chimalpahin wrote, he said, so that future generations would know of ancient Mexico's cultural heritage. We are pleased to bring to light in English translation this quite extraordinary contribution of what Chimalpahin believed should also be known about the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan.

NOTES

1. It is likely that López de Gómara was known only by "Gómara" in his day, but we have opted to use his full name, as he called himself, since that is how he is now known and in order to facilitate bibliographic referencing. Additionally, the title of his opus is *Historia de las Indias y Conquista de México* but the title page of the work itself within the volume has *La conquista de México*. Throughout this book we have used the short form "Conquista" to refer to Chimalpahin's manuscript and *La conquista* to refer to López de Gómara's published book.

2. For information about the role played by the Council of Indies and its officers regarding censorship during these years, and the effect of censorship on the publication and circulation of López de Gómara's writings, see Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera, *Histories of Infamy: Francisco López de Gómara and the Ethics of Spanish Imperialism*, trans. Scott Sessions (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005), 55–61.

3. For discussion of the use of the term in the sixteenth century, see Javier Villa-Flores, *Dangerous Speech: A Social History of Blasphemy in Colonial Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), p. 29.

4. The one known exception does not pertain to the scores of early colonial Mesoamerican writings. For a unique example, to date, of the use of the word

conquista in a primordial title from the 1690s, see Lisa Sousa and Kevin Terraciano, "The 'Original Conquest' of Oaxaca: Nahua and Mixtec Accounts of the Spanish Conquest," *Ethnohistory* 50:2 (2005), 349–400.

5. See Matthew Restall, "Commentary," Conference on Latin American History, American Historical Association meeting, 5 January 2009, and Susan Schroeder, "Introduction: The Genre of Conquest Studies," in *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, ed. Laura E. Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 5–27.

6. Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex, Book 12—The Conquest of Mexico*, ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe and Salt Lake City: School of American Research and the University of Utah), 1975.

7. Don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *Obras históricas*, 2 vols., ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1975, 1977), and don Hernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc, *Crónica mexicana*, ed. Gonzalo Díaz Migoyo and Germán Vázquez Chamorro (Madrid: Dastín, 2001).

8. Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Codex Chimalpahin: Society and Politics in Mexico Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, Texcoco, Culhuacan, and Other Nahua Altepetl in Central Mexico*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Susan Schroeder (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977).

9. By no means was the Latin American Area Center or Mike Meyer in the business of appraising manuscripts or arranging for their translation. Dr. Browning had additional antiquities, but no other manuscripts.

10. Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de las Indias y Conquista de México* (Çaragoça: Agustín Millán, 1552).

11. Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci, *Catálogo del Museo Histórico Indiano*, in *Idea de una nueva historia general de la América septentrional: Fundada sobre material copioso de figuras, symbolos, caracteres y geroglíficos, cantares y manuscritos de autores indios, ultimamente descubiertos* (Madrid: Juan de Zúñiga, 1746).

12. Irving A. Leonard, *Books of the Brave: Being an Account of Books and of Men in the Spanish Conquest and Settlement of the Sixteenth-Century New World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 253, 298.

13. Mariano Veytia, *Historia antigua de México*, ed. C. F. Ortega (1836; México: Editorial Leyenda, 1944), 2:52.

14. Roa-de-la-Carrera is currently preparing a critical edition of the Chimalpahin "Conquista" manuscript for publication in Spanish.

15. This follows Chimalpahin's reckoning of the chapters. It would be Chapter 226 in López de Gómara.

16. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 79.

17. Francisco López de Gómara, *Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary, Francisco López de Gómara*, ed. and trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964).

18. Robert Ricard, *Conquête Spirituelle du Mexique*, in *Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d' Ethnologie*, vol. 20 (Paris: University of Paris, 1933) and *La conquista espiritual de México*, trans. Ángel María de Garibay K. (México: Editorial Jus, 1947). In July 1965, Simpson wrote a personal letter to William Spratling in Mexico, complaining that his work on *Conquista espiritual* was "crawling along at a glacial pace." Of particular interest are his and Spratling's comments on how the book would be received by "our official friends" because of its emphasis on contributions by religious in the early colonial period. William Spratling Correspondence, Spratling Ranch, Taxco el Viejo, México.

19. Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); *The Southeast Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); and *The North Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982).

20. Hugh Thomas, *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) and *Who's Who of the Conquistadors* (London: Cassel, 2000).

21. Boturini, *Catálogo*, 76.

22. Cited in Carlos María de Bustamante, *Historia de las conquistas de Hernando Cortés, escrita en español por Francisco López de Gómara, traducida al mexicano y aprobada por verdadera por D. Juan Bautista [sic] de San Antón Muñón Chimalpain Quauhtlehuanitzin, indio mexicano* (México: de la testamentaria de Ontiveros, 1826), 1:ii.

23. In addition to the Browning Manuscript at the Newberry Library, the extant copies are in Paris (BNP-FE 173, c. 1776); Madrid (BNMa 13367); Mexico City (BNM-FR 1727); New York (Hispanic Society, HC 411/678, c. 1755); and Munich (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, c. 1805). One half of one manuscript is in Dallas, Texas (DL-SMU, c. 1800), and the other half is in Providence, Rhode Island (JCBL, c. 1800). The original Bustamante copy, as well as that by Chimalpahin, has yet to be located.

24. For a full discussion of the creole indigenista movement and the rather extraordinary use of Chimalpahin's "Conquista" manuscript as both a patriotic and an intellectual tool to enhance inchoate Mexican nationalism, see Susan Schroeder, "Chimalpahin, don Carlos María de Bustamante, and *The Conquest of Mexico* as Cause for Mexican Nationalism," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 39, 287–309, 2008.

25. Bustamante, *Historia de las conquistas*.

26. Bustamante, *Historia del descubrimiento de la América septentrional por Cristóbal Cólon, escrita por el R.P. Fr. Manuel de la Vega, religioso franciscano de la provincial del Santo Evangelio de México* (México: Ontiveros, 1826), prologue, n.p.

27. Carlos María de Bustamante, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Archivo Histórico, Colección Antigua, 439 (1834), where Bustamante notes the sale of a manuscript, "La conquista de México sin mascara" for 250 pesos.

28. Alfredo Chavero, "Historia antigua y de la conquista," in *México a través de los siglos*, ed. Vicente Riva Palacio (México: Ballesca y Co., n.d.), 1:xlvi.

II.
Reclaiming the Conquest
An Assessment of Chimalpahin's Modifications to La conquista de México

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Any appraisal of Chimalpahin's work must begin by pondering the paradoxical contrast between his abundant writings and what is known about his life. The facts that can be stated with relative certainty are barely sufficient for a brief biographical sketch. He was born in 1579 in the *altepetl*, or indigenous polity, of Amaquemecan Chalco into a family occupying the lower reaches of Nahua nobility, and was baptized with the rather common name of Domingo Francisco. This young man, who apparently received little formal education but in time became an accomplished autodidact, arrived in Mexico City circa 1593 and devoted himself to the care of the chapel of San Antonio Abad in Xoloco, at the far edge of the city center, even though he probably belonged to the Franciscan parish of San José de los Naturales. In time, he coined the name he would use in his writings, adding to Domingo, his birth name, "don," a Spanish honorific term; "San Antón," a reference to his chapel; "Muñón," the family name of two of its illustrious patrons; and the genealogically relevant Nahua names "Chimalpahin" and "Quauhtlehuanitzin."[1] Between 1593 and 1620, he composed a record of the history of Colhuacan and numerous collections of annals about the ancient Nahua past, maintained another set of annals about important events in Mexico City and New Spain covering the period 1577–1615, copied several works by other indigenous authors, and produced his own Spanish-language version of Francisco López de Gómara's *La conquista de México*.[2]

Although Chimalpahin's abundant and richly detailed Nahuatl-language annals place him among the most diligent and productive

indigenous authors in colonial Spanish America, we know precious little about the social networks in which he moved, and even less about the circumstances in which he composed such a varied body of writings about the Nahua past. This disjunction is compounded by the fact that Chimalpahin's intended audience would have been a rather narrow sector of colonial society. Nahua annalists began composing alphabetic, as opposed to pictorial, historical annals in Nahuatl about their communities in the mid-sixteenth century and continued to do so for at least two more centuries.[3] These manuscripts were addressed to an audience composed primarily of elite, literate Nahuas and interested local clergy or doctrinal authors. Thus, most of Chimalpahin's oeuvre addressed indigenous concerns about the royal genealogies and sociopolitical history of his own native Amaquemecan Chalco and other prominent Nahua altepetl. Unlike other indigenous authors, Chimalpahin neither sought nor expected this work to bring him recognition or a radical change in social standing. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his works were not cited by his contemporaries, although he was trusted enough to work with ancient manuscripts. His lifetime occupation, hence, was the compilation of historical accounts about renowned Nahua altepetl in Central Mexico from scattered pictographic, oral, and alphabetic sources into a more coherent set of alphabetic texts for posterity.[4] He probably approached López de Gómara's *La conquista* in the same spirit—as an important chronicle about the defeat of Mexico Tenochtitlan that needed to be copied, amended, and preserved.

AUTHORSHIP AND INTELLECTUAL COLLABORATIONS IN CHIMALPAHIN'S AGE

At some point in his career, Chimalpahin sat down with a manuscript or printed version of Francisco López de Gómara's *La conquista de México*. In a bold and unusual intellectual move, he modified in a selective manner many passages and deleted some words and phrases, although he did copy without emendation many of the Spanish chronicler's words. Following his usual procedure in the annals, he placed his name in a passage toward the middle of the narrative.[5] As noted earlier in Susan Schroeder's introduction, Chimalpahin's holograph is now lost, and the earliest existing copy is the eighteenth-century copy from Lorenzo Boturini's collection now known as the Browning Manuscript, which we have translated in this work. This manuscript begins with a paradoxical statement: "The Conquest of Mexico Written by d[o]n Dom[ing]o de S[a]n Antón Muñón [Chimalpahin] Quauhtlehuanitzin,"[6] a title that epitomizes the authorial

merging of Chimalpahin and López de Gómara. Although the title does follow his own signing conventions, Chimalpahin probably did not write it, for he did not routinely write his name at the beginning of his Nahuatl works.[7] Moreover, the title may be a later addition to the Browning Manuscript. In an ironic turn, the text's copyists, including Boturini, apparently regarded Chimalpahin as the sole author; one copyist went so far as to suggest that Chimalpahin was a witness to the conquest.[8]

An understanding of the multiple entanglements joining the Spanish chronicler to his Nahua editor thus hinges on an appraisal of authorship practices in Chimalpahin's age. Early modern notions of authorship did not center on the idea of an individual producing original work that no one else could legitimately appropriate. While printed editions were protected by *privilegio*, a legal mechanism barring the unlicensed reprinting of successful works, copyright did not emerge as a fully articulated legal notion until the mid-eighteenth century.[9] Moreover, Chimalpahin worked at the edge of an intellectual milieu in which mendicants and Nahua intellectuals collaborated quite closely on projects whose output defied authorship as an individualistic notion. For instance, the most productive doctrinal writer in late sixteenth-century New Spain was the Franciscan Juan Bautista Viseo, who published seventeen works under his own name, most of them Nahuatl devotional texts.[10] Bautista was the author of these works only in the narrow sense that Michel Foucault called the "penal appropriation"[11] of early modern authorship: he secured permission to print the works, and could thus be punished for their contents. Hence, Bautista was not these works' sole composer: he appropriated some doctrinal materials that other Franciscans had left in manuscript form and worked in collaboration with a network of indigenous scholars who had studied at the Franciscan Colegio de Santa Cruz at Tlatelolco.[12] In contrast to Bautista, a prominent Franciscan in an intellectual milieu more exalted than that at San Antonio Abad, Chimalpahin would not easily have been identified as an author in his lifetime. About half a century after the printing of López de Gómara's *La conquista* had been banned, the legal status of a copy of its contents may have been controversial. However, Chimalpahin's possession of *La conquista* would not necessarily have attracted prosecution: while civil administrators and officers of the Inquisition kept a register of printed works that were banned in the Indies, in practice the enforcement of these directives was lax and episodic.[13] Paradoxically, as a rather obscure Nahua intellectual working on manuscripts that would not be printed or become widely known in his lifetime, Chimalpahin may have enjoyed a latitude greater than that afforded to better known Nahua or Spanish figures.

While we have no knowledge of the precise reasons that led Chimalpahin to work on *La conquista*, his activities as annalist and copyist provide a context for understanding what he might have set out to accomplish. Chimalpahin's scholarly interests went well beyond Nahua historical accounts. The multiple and widespread references to European history, classical antiquity, and saints' lives that figure in his Nahuatl-language works demonstrate that Chimalpahin sought out and pondered Spanish-language historical, ecclesiastical, and devotional texts. López de Gómara, however, was not the only Spanish author whose work Chimalpahin appropriated. When Chimalpahin proposed a comparison between the Mexica 260-day divinatory calendar and the European 365-day count, he included information about zodiac signs drawn from Enrico Martínez's influential 1606 *Reportorio de los tiempos y historia natural desta Nueva España*.[14] Martínez was also the source of some of Chimalpahin's references to European historical geography, which included the statement that the indigenous peoples of New Spain and the inhabitants of Courland, a Baltic duchy then associated with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, resembled each other in bodily shape and spiritual qualities.[15] Furthermore, Chimalpahin copied doctrinal texts, as attested by his transcription of *Exercicio quotidiano*, a Nahuatl work revised by the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún.[16] Although Chimalpahin's degree of knowledge about and access to the vast Sahaguntine corpus is unknown, Chimalpahin was certainly familiar with works by Sahagún other than the *Exercicio*.[17]

Indeed, Chimalpahin's "Conquista" manuscript has some of the characteristics of a copyist's incomplete draft, as it contains a few aberrant sections. The manuscript lacks the original's last twenty-three chapters and a final section about Cortés, features a few false starts in which Chimalpahin begins glossing a sentence and then repeats the original one verbatim,[18] and, most memorably, features a half-folio section repeated twice in folios 54 and 54v, initially with various changes introduced by Chimalpahin and then once again without any modifications. Chimalpahin even notes that a certain ruler "also had another name,"[19] perhaps as a reminder of its eventual insertion. Thus, he obviously possessed the skills and intellectual curiosity that facilitated the production of a full manuscript copy of López de Gómara's text, and he could have begun this process either by commission or as an extension of his interest in the history of the various Nahua altepetl. Whether or not Chimalpahin had any knowledge of Sahagún's Nahuatl-language narratives concerning the conquest of Mexico Tenochtitlan now known as Book Twelve of the Florentine Codex is open to speculation.[20] Indeed, Chimalpahin's "Conquista" shows little trace of Book Twelve's anti-Tlaxcalteca bias and episodic characterizations of Spaniards as rapacious warriors.

CHIMALPAHIN'S SIGNATURE INTERVENTIONS IN "CONQUISTA"

What follows is an overview of the most significant modifications introduced by Chimalpahin into López de Gómara's work. We are as confident as we can be without having a holograph that the additions and changes we have highlighted in our translation were introduced by Chimalpahin. As a group, these changes consistently reflect Chimalpahin's sociopolitical orientation, as well as his intimate knowledge of Nahua communities in central Mexico. An alternative hypothesis would be that another author became Chimalpahin's doppelgänger by replicating his procedures and appropriating his name. However, no extant evidence provides support for such an elaborate possibility.[21] The extent of changes introduced by Chimalpahin is both massive and heterogeneous, thus this discussion is but a brief introduction focusing on four issues: changes that characterize Chimalpahin's major concerns as an annalist, his additions about Nahua history and culture, his perspective on the Spanish conquerors, and his linguistic and orthographic usage as a native speaker of Nahuatl.

The only instance in which Chimalpahin refers to himself by name in this manuscript is nothing short of momentous. As discussed above, he inserts his name in the middle of a description of the retinue of Moteuczoma Xocoyotzin (Moteuczoma hereinafter), during the pivotal first encounter with Cortés on November 8, 1519. Here, he notes that, "although the author Francisco Rodríguez [*sic*] de Gómara" believed Cuitlahuac, lord of Iztacpalapan, to be Moteuczoma's nephew, "he was not his nephew but a blood brother by his father or mother. I say this, don Domingo de San Antón Muñón [Chimalpahin] Quauhtlehuanitzin."[22] This is the only occasion when Chimalpahin directly refers to a discrepancy in views between himself and his source. Chimalpahin's adoption of the spurious "Rodríguez" does suggest that he did not have access to a copy of the *La conquista* containing its author's full name. Like many of his contemporaries, Chimalpahin may have referred to the Spanish chronicler simply as "Gómara." The rest of Chimalpahin's addition also establishes a distinction between Nahua and Spanish views of the same event. While the Spanish chronicler mentions only two of Moteuczoma's companions by name, his Nahua counterpart lists the names and titles of nine other "powerful princes and lords of great estates," among which one finds the rulers of Tlacopan and Tlatelolco, two of the sons of former Mexica emperors Ahuitzotl and Tizoc, and the son of the chief architect of Mexica expansion in the 1430s, "Chief Judge Tlacaelel Cihuacoatl, founder of the Mexica empire."[23]

Such an emphasis on names and titles is very familiar to any reader

of Chimalpahin's annals, which feature systematic and painstaking renditions of Nahua titles. Similarly, in his "Conquista," Moteuczoma is almost always "**King** Moteuczoma," and Cortés is "**Captain** Cortés." However, Chimalpahin follows López de Gómara's usage by omitting the honorific *doña* before the name of Marina, or "Malinche," Cortés's main indigenous interpreter, although such usage becomes more prevalent later. Moreover, Chimalpahin introduces many names not mentioned by López de Gómara and adds the Nahua titles of indigenous protagonists. One finds insertions such as "don Fernando **Tecocoltzin**,"[24] "don Pedro **de** Moteuczoma **Tlacahuepan**,"[25] and the addition of the honorific Nahuatl suffix *-tzin* to many names, which extends to Phurépecha names such as that of the ruler Cazonzi.[26]

As one would expect of an annalist who extolled the history of his hometown, Chimalpahin adds substantial commentary to two sections in the original that refer to Amaquemecan Chalco. As a complement to a terse narrative about Cortés's first approach to this altepetl, Chimalpahin notes that there were seven cities in the district and that a leading town was the Mexica subject town called Amaquemecan, with Cacamatzin Teohuateuctli as its ruler. He also adds 5,000 people to López de Gómara's population estimate of 20,000. Furthermore, Chimalpahin asserts that it was none other than Cortés who erected the first cross in the region atop the summit now known as Sacromonte.[27] In another section depicting the visit of Cortés and his indigenous allies to Tlalmanalco, "the principal town of Chalco," Chimalpahin duly reports both the precontact Nahua names and the Christian baptismal names of the three lords of the province who greeted Cortés.[28] This latter addition highlights a concern with foundational moments—the coming of Christianity and the friendly reception that many indigenous rulers were said to extend to arriving Spaniards—frequently echoed in a heterogeneous array of indigenous petitions, wills, primordial titles, and land documents in central Mexico.[29]

CHIMALPAHIN'S COMMENTARIES ON NAHUA HISTORY AND GENEALOGY

Chimalpahin's most systematic preoccupation as editor seems to be the description of the titles and genealogy of indigenous figures whom López de Gómara mentions only in passing. An important example is found at the end of a paragraph regarding Cortés's decision to return to Spain to negotiate his political standing, after having been exiled from Mexico City by Alonso de Estrada. López de Gómara places little emphasis on the

identity of Cortés's noble companions, and identifies only three of them. In contrast, Chimalpahin provides a detailed account of some of the first Nahua rulers ever to journey to Spain: fifteen lords listed by altepetl and rank. Thus, we learn that the Mexica contingent included Moteuczoma's sons, don Pedro de Moteuczoma Tlacahuepan and don Martín Cortés Nezahualtecolotl; his nephew don Francisco de Alvarado Matlaccohuatzin; a member of his "Imperial Council," Damián Tlacochcalcatl; and don Gaspar Toltequitzin. The latter's inclusion establishes a link between this narrative and Chimalpahin's Mexico City home in San Antón Abad, as Toltequitzin turns out to be the lord of Xoloco Acatlan, the barrio where Chimalpahin's church is located.[30] In another important addition, he notes the names of three native lords who died while accompanying Cortés in his expedition against the rebel conqueror, Cristóbal de Olid. Furthermore, Chimalpahin informs us that an election held to replace one of them as lord of Mexico Tenochtitlan resulted in the appointment of don Andrés Motelchiuhtzin, Moteuczoma's steward and a warrior of commoner descent who was mentioned in multiple additions.[31]

Throughout the text, Chimalpahin inserts many evocative descriptions regarding Nahua customs and cultural practices. He stresses that Moteuczoma's "commanding presence" was instrumental in making himself obeyed,[32] and fixates on the details of his crown, "high in the front like a bishop's miter, all inset with pearls and fastened at the back."[33] In an almost intimate aside, Chimalpahin indicates that, while Moteuczoma had a preference for eating the feet and heels of sacrificed men because he regarded it as "the most flavorful flesh," he engaged in cannibalism "only a few times," in contrast with his predecessors.[34] Chimalpahin's portrayal of Malintzin departs from the original, since he often refers to her as "Tenepal."[35] As to the ritual exchange of insults in the battlefield, he renders them even more pointed and graphic by indicating that the Mexica shouted at the Spaniards, "Wait, sons of the sun, for you will soon die by our hand, and we will eat you alive, grilled on a barbecue and cooked, in morsels, as your flesh is tasty!"[36] Moreover, when discussing *xochiyaoyotl*, the Mexica "flowery wars" that provided a steady supply of sacrificial victims for state ritual practices, Chimalpahin writes that the youths in these wars would journey south to Tehuantepec to obtain cacao, and stresses the victorious return of war captains laden with gold, precious stones, feathers, and slaves.[37]

Moreover, Chimalpahin places particular care in the characterization of non-Mexica indigenous groups. Chimalpahin's early seventeenth-century vantage point is in evidence when discussing the importance of the production of cochineal, a dye derived from cactus-dwelling insects. He asserts that the cochineal trade had caused a rise in the wealth of the

Tlaxcalteca[38] and allowed the Otomi to supplement their meager forms of subsistence.[39] He also stresses the rustic character of the Otomi by depicting them as untamed nomadic peoples of the highlands, "courageous like the Arabs in Africa, who fight naked with bow and arrow."[40] Moreover, in a section describing Cortés's triumph at Cholola, Chimalpahin inserts the names of two local lords[41] and points out that he had personally been astonished by the generosity shown to beggars in this city.[42] He also refers to the possibility that Christianity had been preached to natives in Mexico prior to Cortés by noting the "mystery" of the red crosses displayed on the garments of Quetzalcoatl, Cholola's tutelary deity.[43]

CHIMALPAHIN'S VIEWS ABOUT THE CONQUERORS IN "LA CONQUISTA"

One of the most remarkable characteristics of "La Conquista" is that Chimalpahin's modifications do not occur at a regular pace in the text; sometimes, he simply copies numerous uninterrupted pages of López de Gómara's account. It is striking to find that Chimalpahin chose to appropriate a substantial amount of the Spanish chronicler's narrative verbatim, while the exacting character of his interventions suggests that he was exercising his judgment as annalist rather than merely discharging his duties as copyist. In "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," a well-known short story by Jorge Luis Borges, the title character attempts to write the novel *Don Quixote de La Mancha*, and succeeds in producing a few sections that are, word for word, identical to those of the original.[44] According to Borges, Menard recreates Cervantes's world as his own self, Menard, rather than by becoming Cervantes through introspection. In doing so, Menard's words acquire a meaning that departs from that of Cervantes's words, as each of these works was written in a different historical context. We could bear Borges's thought experiment in mind as we ponder Chimalpahin's motivations for copying many of Gómara's passages verbatim. In doing so, like Menard, Chimalpahin changed the way we might interpret López de Gómara's text. Perhaps the most astounding result of this procedure is that Chimalpahin chose to inhabit the Spanish "we" and "us" that López de Gómara utilizes to separate the Spanish army from all indigenous peoples, including those receiving the deliberately vague designation of *amigos*, "friends."[45] Thus, every time Cortés's army trounces Mexica or indigenous enemies in battle, Chimalpahin's identity as an author is indexed by the Spanish chronicler's "we." Rather than remaining a mere indigenous ally, for a fleeting moment Chimalpahin becomes, retrospectively, a conqueror.

Even if his work as a historian reveals an impressive knowledge of Nahua history, Chimalpahin typically addressed this subject from the perspective of a sincere Nahua Christian; for instance, when he wrote about the 1539 execution of Nahua nobleman don Carlos Chichimecateuctli, who had been convicted of heresy by Bishop fray Juan de Zumárraga, he noted that "idolatry was burned along with him."[46] Such a vantage point, which emphasizes the role of Cortés as both conqueror and divine instrument, is in ample evidence throughout his additions. Chimalpahin ends his description of the first meeting between Cortés and Moteuczoma by specifying that it took place on the "day of the Four Crowned Saints," inserting "our Lord" after the original text's clause "in the year of Christ." As he discusses the various arguments Moteuczoma's ambassadors presented to Cortés in order to dissuade him from journeying to Mexico Tenochtitlan, Chimalpahin remarks that "such frightful admonitions were of no use because Almighty God inspired them with great hope."[47] This providential tone is used once more when Chimalpahin observes that, were the Mexica to have had "greater understanding, they could well have destroyed the Spaniards with many ruses," given their knowledge of the terrain; he attributes this failure to act to "the divine will of God's Providence."[48] He also comments on the futility of Mexica attempts to mislead Cortés by stating that the Spanish triumph was predicted by "an oracle [revealing] that their monarchy was coming to an end and that strangers would come from the direction where the sun rises to conquer them."[49] Chimalpahin seems to share with López de Gómara the belief that indigenous peoples regarded the Spaniards as demiurgic. In an aside about the wondrous admiration with which the Mexica beheld the Spaniards' beards and long hair, he records their fright before men on horseback, whom they believed to be gods, while other observers "said they were sons of the sun, believing them immortal."[50] Moreover, Chimalpahin's knowledge of classical antiquity is on display when he exalts Cortés's generosity by remarking that he was "another Alexander the Great in his munificence,"[51] or lauds the conqueror by saying "he showed greater resolve than Caesar";[52] both comparisons bring to mind Sahagún's evocative contention that the Mexica tutelary deity Huitzilopochtli was "another Hercules."[53]

Chimalpahin's moral stance toward the treatment of women in the conquest suggests a concern with the honor of indigenous women and with the Spaniards' reputation. He takes pains to indicate that the people of Cholola had given the Spaniards several women "as hostages"[54] and not as concubines, and that the women whom the Mexica gave the Spaniards after lodging them were indeed "servants."[55] Moreover, Chimalpahin depicts Cortés's policy toward the capture of women during warfare

as a principle that must be taught to cavalier native allies. When the Tlaxcalteca pillaged a section of Mexico Tenochtitlan, Cortés allegedly tells the native lords "they should not take women as slaves, for their plunder sufficed. He had come not to offend the natives but to deliver all these nations from their servitude."[56] Later, when Cortés learned that his men had captured women and young men in Xomiltepec, Chimalpahin asserts that he ordered his soldiers not to do so again "under penalty of death."[57] It seems, however, that concern for female chastity was not the exclusive province of Europeans. In an addition to a chapter that discusses Moteuczoma's concubines, Chimalpahin states that no commoner could cast a glance in their direction, "or they would pay with their lives. Their virtue was so great that, despite their idolatry, they obeyed their laws."[58]

CHIMALPAHIN AS A NAHUATL-SPEAKING EDITOR

It is likely that Boturini and various anonymous copyists modified the original Spanish and Nahuatl orthography that Chimalpahin employed in his holograph. These modifications apparently proceeded along two diverging lines. On the one hand, the Browning Manuscript's Spanish orthographic usage is relatively orthodox for the midcolonial period, and in fact diverges from the earlier stylistic conventions applied in López de Gómara's 1552 edition. Since some of the Spanish loanwords Chimalpahin inserts in his Nahuatl writings reflect the pronunciation of a non-native speaker of Spanish, it is possible that the manuscript's fairly standardized Spanish spelling was due to a copyist. On the other hand, this manuscript exhibits an unusual range of variation for Nahuatl proper names that one would expect Chimalpahin to systematize, as he does in his annals; for instance, there are thirteen variations for Moteuczoma, four for Quauhtemoc, and three for Quetzalcoatl.[59] These variations may have been introduced by a copyist, even if the manuscript did retain Chimalpahin's signature spelling of the term for "lord" as *teuhctli*, rather than *teuctli* or *tecutli*.[60]

Chimalpahin's additions throughout the text display a superior command of literary Spanish, with a few exceptions. A few examples point in the direction of a Nahuatl speaker: on folio 129, we find *suple*, "to substitute," instead of *sufre*, "to suffer," which exemplifies two typical phonemic substitutions of /p/ for /f/ and /l/ for /r/ employed by Nahuatl native speakers when writing in Spanish; as a further example of the latter, on folio 125v, Chimalpahin writes "Elvilla" instead of the canonical

"Elvira."[61] On folio 76, we find an intrusive /t/ in the phrase *en tentiendolos hechos*, a minor change from *en teniéndoles hechos*, "as soon as they are built." Other minor inaccuracies appear elsewhere.[62]

Only in a few instances do we find that Chimalpahin misunderstood Spanish terms. The most glaring example is his interpretation of the noun phrase *ojos de la calzada*, "the causeway's archways," which López de Gómara uses several times to refer to the space underneath the causeways that connected Mexico Tenochtitlan, the Mexica altepetl occupying an island in a lake, with the mainland. Chimalpahin transforms this phrase into *ojos de agua*, "water sources," which fits the semantic context better from a native perspective, since, unlike their European counterparts, Mexica causeways had no archways. This substitution results in describing drawbridges and brigantines as going over water springs rather than across causeway spans.[63] A final example occurs after the famous scene in which former Mexica king Quauhtemoc refuses to reveal the location of his treasure even after being tortured. The original text (f. 120) states that Cortés ordered an end to the ordeal *porque dijo como lo echara en la laguna*, "because Quauhtemoc [said] he had thrown [the treasure] into the lake"; Chimalpahin changes the clause into *porque dijo* ***que*** *lo hechara en la laguna*—literally, "because Quauhtemoc told [Cortés] to throw [him] into the lake." This modification, which we discuss in a footnote to our translation, shifts the referent for the direct object "lo" from the treasure to Quauhtemoc himself, turning Quauhtemoc's explanation into a defiant stance.

Surprisingly, Chimalpahin's corrections of inaccurate or improperly glossed Nahuatl terms do not seem to be a highly systematic endeavor. He modifies the glosses of some Nahuatl place names; for instance, he specifies that Texcallan means "Place of the Crag" rather than "House of the Crag" and gives the correct gloss for Tepeticpac as "Hilltop."[64] On the other hand, he provides a doubtful etymology for Xaltocan, which he glosses as "Place of Spiders" rather than "Place of Sand."[65] Occasionally, he uses Nahuatl terms as mots justes—such as *nochiztli* for "cochineal,"[66] *nezahualiztli* for "ritual fasting,"[67] *quetzalli* for "feathers," and *tolli* for "reeds"[68]—but he also employs Hispanicized Nahuatl words that were probably prevalent at the time—such as *amillote* rather than *amilotl*, or *xouille* for *xouilin* when describing two types of fish.[69] However, for reasons not understood, Chimalpahin does not amend some glaring Nahuatl errors in the text, such as *tlamacaztli* in lieu of *tlamacazqui*, "priest,"[70] or sharpen the imprecise translations of the Nahua place names Cuetlaxcoapan and Huitzilapan as "Snake in Water" and "Bird in Water," which literally mean "Tanned-Leather Snake in Water" and "Hummingbird in Water," respectively.[71]

Since Chimalpahin had little specialized knowledge about Mexica calendrical systems, he refers to Nahua calendrical signs in an unsystematic manner in "Conquista."[72] When López de Gómara discusses the Nahua God of Drunkenness, Ome Tochtli (2-Rabbit), for example, Chimalpahin compares him to the Roman god Bacchus and glosses the name as "Two Rabbits" [*sic*],[73] without indicating that this is a calendrical name. In another section that discusses the emblems Moteuczoma placed in his treasure houses, Chimalpahin copies the phrase "with a rabbit for [Moteuczoma's] coat of arms,"[74] but he does not indicate that this sign refers to Moteuczoma's year of accession, 10-Rabbit (circa 1502), which he does report in his Nahuatl annals. A final example shows that the Nahua annalist defers to the Spanish chronicler in matters of Mexica chronology, for he does not amend López de Gómara's statement that the age of the current Mexica sun, counted backwards from 1552, is 858 European years.[75] This calculation would place that era's beginning at circa A.D. 694, which does not quite match A.D. 670, Chimalpahin's starting date for his Nahuatl-language annals corresponding to that period.

CONCLUSION

What motivated Chimalpahin to produce this work? It is impossible to extrapolate a specific motivation from the manuscript, but Chimalpahin's own place of residence may provide an indirect clue. As Susan Schroeder suggested,[76] Chimalpahin's residence in San Antonio Abad in Xoloco was located at the site of Moteuczoma's momentous first encounter with Cortés,[77] and a commemoration of this event in the late sixteenth century would certainly have captured the attention of such a perceptive annalist. In composing this work, Chimalpahin manages to turn the tables on the frequent appropriation of indigenous annals and narratives by Spanish chroniclers and doctrinal authors: just as they borrowed from a variety of anonymous or poorly documented indigenous sources, Chimalpahin adopts and reworks what he and other early seventeenth-century readers of history held to be a definitive treatment of the conquest of Mexico. Moreover, this Nahua intellectual appropriates López de Gómara's "we" without comment, allowing the pronoun to index both Spanish historical actors and his own presence in the text as copyist and editor.

Chimalpahin's hybrid "Conquista" is the sole extant attempt by a colonial American indigenous author to appropriate and modify a historical narrative by a Spanish chronicler about the Americas. The very fact of its existence adds a layer of complexity to our understanding of the ways in which indigenous intellectuals wrote and understood his-

torical narratives. Of necessity, Chimalpahin fused a set of assumptions about historical narratives meant for consumption by a heterogeneous Spanish audience with those he held dear as a compiler and copyist of altepetl annals. This procedure resulted in a revised narrative flow that stops at certain intervals to emphasize elements that were overlooked or minimized by López de Gómara: foundational encounters between native rulers and Cortés, the lineage and deeds of Cortés's indigenous allies and travel companions, and the titles and eventual fate of deceased native rulers.

There is a single metadiscursive moment in which Chimalpahin signals his authority as an annalist to the manuscript's intended audience: in the one correction made to López de Gómara's assertion regarding the kinship link between Cuitlahuac and Moteuczoma. Elsewhere, Chimalpahin's claim to historiographical knowledge is exercised through many changes and elisions that may be fully discerned only through a sustained comparison between López de Gómara's original and Chimalpahin's version. Chimalpahin does not correct Nahuatl terms in *La conquista* with a heavy hand or offer radically different interpretations of the reasons for the defeat of the Mexica or Cortés's multiple victories; indeed, he accepts and even stresses the preordained and providential nature of Cortés's triumph. Nevertheless, the profusion of vivid and visually compelling descriptions that he inserts throughout the text serves as a systematic reminder of memorable details that were ignored by López de Gómara, ranging from the appearance of Moteuczoma's crown to the manufacture of Mexica weapons. Furthermore, Chimalpahin uses a number of compelling comparisons—Ome Tochtli as Bacchus, for example, or the Otomi as Arabs—to render indigenous cultural practices in terms that would have been familiar to educated audiences in New Spain.

The multiplicity of Chimalpahin's objectives, his heterodox approach to text composition, and the complexity of his authorial voice present three important challenges to his twenty-first-century readers. Instead of upholding a contrast between indigenous peoples and Spaniards, Mexica foes and Cortés's allies, or the victors and the vanquished, he emerges as a highly original native author. Chimalpahin surveys the broad panorama afforded by López de Gómara's text and reclaims this narrative from the vantage point of a colonial Christian native intellectual who was also an expert on traditional Nahua rulership. In the end, Chimalpahin does become, within the confines of his work as an indigenous historian, the equal of a legendary Spanish chronicler in intellectual and discursive terms.

NOTES

1. Susan Schroeder, *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 7–26. Chimalpahin identified Diego de Muñón as a patron of San Antón in 1591, and also emphasized the patronage of don Sancho Sánchez de Muñón, a member of Mexico City's cathedral council.

2. Some selections of Chimalpahin's writings have been edited or translated by Jacqueline de Durand-Forest, Walter Lehmann, and Silvia Rendón, among other authors. More recently, three volumes containing authoritative transcriptions and English translations of Chimalpahin's writings have appeared as *Codex Chimalpahin: Society and Politics in Mexico Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, Texcoco, Culhuacan, and other Nahua Altepetl in Central Mexico*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Susan Schroeder (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); and *Annals of His Time: Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin*, ed. and trans. James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). Rafael Tena edited and translated Chimalpahin's writings into Spanish as *Las ocho relaciones y El memorial de Colhuacan*, 2 vols. (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998) and *Diario* (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2001).

3. See James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 376–92.

4. For an exhaustive discussion of Chimalpahin's historical writings, see Schroeder, *Chimalpahin*.

5. In this insertion, discussed in detail below, he calls himself "don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Quauhtlehuanitzin," for he occasionally omitted "Chimalpahin" from his signed name; see Chimalpahin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 1:90–91, 180–81.

6. Newberry Library, Vault folio Case Ms 5011, "La Conquista de Mexico compuesta por D[o]n Dom[in]go de S[a]n Anton Muñon Quauhtlehuanitzin" (CH hereinafter).

7. Chimalpahin used Spanish phrases as titles, but these phrases are never accompanied by his name. See Chimalpahin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 1:26–27, 64–65, 178–79; 1:62–63, 130–31.

8. Hispanic Society of America, Manuscript 411 / 768, "La Conquista de Mexico Escripta por D[o]n Domingo de S[a]n Anton Muñon Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin," f. 1: "who appears to have written this History while in Spain. However, since he was a mestizo native to New Spain, he denotes through some of his statements that he was present in many of the events he relates. It cannot be doubted that he met the first conquerors."

9. See Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992).

10. Chimalpahin himself appropriated some passages from the works of Bautista and other Franciscan and Dominican authors. See Chimalpahin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 1:6. For a summary of Bautista's authorial practices, see David

Tavárez, "Naming the Trinity: From Ideologies of Translation to Dialectics of Reception in Colonial Nahua Texts, 1547–1771," *Colonial Latin American Review* 91 (2000), 21–47.

11. Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 108.

12. Bautista names eight of them in his 1606 *Sermonario en lengua mexicana*. See Louise Burkhart, *Holy Wednesday: A Nahua Drama from Early Colonial Mexico* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

13. See Irving Leonard, *Books of the Brave: Being an Account of Books and of Men in the Spanish Conquest and Settlement of the Sixteenth-Century New World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

14. This work by Enrico Martínez was reprinted as *Reportorio de los tiempos e historia natural de Nueva España* (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1948).

15. Chimalpahin cites Martínez as the source of this statement. See Chimalpahin, *Las ocho relaciones*, 1:308–11. Also, for additional information about Chimalpahin's understanding of the origin of North America's first inhabitants, see Susan Schroeder, "Chimalpahin Rewrites the Conquest: Yet Another Epic History?" in *The Conquest All Over Again: Nahuas and Zapotecs Thinking, Painting, and Writing the Conquest of Mexico* (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2010).

16. Chimalpahin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 1:8–10.

17. There was no contact between this missionary and the Nahua author, since Chimalpahin worked on *La conquista* decades after Sahagún's death. See Miguel León-Portilla, "Chimalpahin's Use of a Testimony by Sahagún: The Olmecs in Chalco-Amaquemecan," in *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico*, ed. J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber (Albany, NY: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, State University at Albany, 1988), 179–98.

18. See, for instance, the sentence about Cortés's summoning of native governors at the end of CH, f. 47.

19. This was Cucuzca, Cacama's younger brother; CH, f. 73v.

20. See James Lockhart, *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

21. There have been no historical controversies regarding Chimalpahin's authorship. However, the authorship of Guamán Poma de Ayala's *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* has recently been debated by Andeanists after the alleged discovery of documents subsequently characterized as forgeries. See Kenneth Andrien, "The Virtual and the Real: The Case of the Mysterious Documents from Naples," *History Compass* 6:5 (2008), 1304–24.

22. CH, f. 53v.

23. CH, f. 54.

24. CH, f. 96.

25. CH, f. 163.

26. CH, f. 154. The application of this ending to a Phurépecha name is an

aberrant use of the Nahuatl honorific, which was employed only for Nahua names.

27. CH, f. 52.

28. CH, f. 102v. The lords in question were Omacatzin Teohuateuhctli, later don Hernando de Guzmán, lord of the quarter of Opochhuacan Tlacochcalco; Tequanxayacatzin Teohuateuhctli, later don Juan de Sandoval, principal of the quarter of Tlailotlacan in Amaquemecan; and Tequanxayacatzin's brother Quetzalmaçatzin Chichimecateuhctli, later don Tomás de San Martín, lord of the Itztlacoçauhcan quarter in Amaquemecan.

29. See Stephanie Wood, *Transcending Conquest: Nahua Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003).

30. CH, f. 153. Chimalpahin also indicates that this group included representatives from Tlacopan, Colhuacan, Cuitlahuac, Tlalmanalco, Cempoala, and Tlaxcala.

31. For more information on Motelchiuhtzin, see Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964), 168, 172.

32. CH, f. 56.

33. CH, f. 54.

34. CH, ff. 56v–57.

35. Chimalpahin specifies that Tenepal was part of Malintzin's proper name in ff. 21v, 22, 22v, 104, and 137v. James Lockhart notes that Chimalpahin may not have recognized "Marina" as a Spanish variant of "Malintzin," and also suggests that "Tenepal" is a corruption of the Nahuatl *tenenepil*, "somebody's tongue," a likely calque of the Spanish term *lengua*, "translator."

36. CH, f. 105.

37. CH, f. 44v.

38. CH, f. 42v.

39. CH, f. 43.

40. CH, f. 42v.

41. CH, f. 46.

42. CH, f. 48v.

43. CH, f. 49. For further discussion of signs interpreted by colonial observers as potential proofs of pre-Hispanic evangelization in Mexico, see Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531–1813* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

44. See Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (New York: Penguin, 1999), 88–95.

45. Kevin Terraciano, personal communication, 2008.

46. Chimalpahin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 1, 40.

47. CH, f. 50v.

48. CH, f. 52.

49. CH, f. 50.

50. CH, f. 52v.

51. CH, f. 106.

52. CH, f. 79v.

53. For a discussion of the use of parallels from classical antiquity to describe and interpret Nahua culture, see Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

54. CH, f. 45.

55. CH, f. 51v.

56. CH, f. 99.

57. CH, f. 104.

58. CH, f. 59.

59. Respectively, they are as follows: (1) Moctezuma, Moteçuma, Moteççuma, Moteucçoma, Motecçumatzin, Motecçuma, Moteczumatzin, Moteccuma, Moteczumazin, Motezuma, Moteczumacin, Moteczuma, Moteczumaçin; (2) Quahutimoctzin, Quahutimoc, Quautimoc, Quautimocin; and (3) Queçalcohuatl, Queçalcohuatl, Quezalcoauatl.

60. See Chimalpahin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 1:9. Chimalpahin's native-speaker awareness of distinctive sounds found in Nahuatl but not in Spanish may account for his spelling of *teuhctli* with an *h*. According to Norman McQuown's reconstruction of the phonological inventory of Nahuatl (personal communication, 1997), the /k/ in *teuhctli* was labialized, yielding [k^w], and the *h* may reflect Chimalpahin's awareness of prelabialization.

61. The phonemic inventory of precontact Nahuatl did not include /f/ and /r/ as separate phonemes. See Lockhart, *Nahuas*, 296. The reference to doña Elvira suggests that Chimalpahin had access to previously unknown materials by Nahua author Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc.

62. For instance, *guarnición*, "garrison," instead of *governación*, "governance"; and *reprobó*, "condemned him," instead of *probó*, "corroborated."

63. CH, ff. 53v and 109.

64. CH, f. 42v.

65. CH, f. 99. Lockhart analyzes Xaltocan as *xal-to-can*, where *-to-* is either an auxiliary ligature or the auxiliary of the verb *onoc*, "to lie." At this point in the text, Chimalpahin is not merely discussing an etymology, but arguing against the possibility that Xaltocan's emblem contained a frog rather than a spider. Since reference to either emblem is not found in López de Gómara, Chimalpahin may have been referring to an unknown source here.

66. CH, f. 43.

67. CH, f. 49.

68. CH, f. 54v.

69. CH, f. 53.

70. CH, f. 67.

71. CH, f. 154v.

72. For instance, Chimalpahin merged the Mexica 260-day count with the Mexica 365-day vague solar year, and stated, erroneously, that the 365-day count included 100 days "with no fortune." See Chimalpahin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 1:118–29.

73. CH, f. 43.

74. CH, f. 61.

75. CH, f. 159v.

76. Susan Schroeder, "Chimalpahin, don Carlos María de Bustamante, and *The Conquest of Mexico* as Cause for Mexican Nationalism," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 39 (2008), 287–309.

77. Chimalpahin refers to San Antón Abad twice in his text. He first asserts that it was located where Moteuczoma met Cortés (CH, f. 108v), and then states that the lord of the barrio where the church was founded accompanied Cortés on a return trip to Spain (CH, f. 153).

III.
Francisco López de Gómara and *La conquista de México*

Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera

The Spanish historian Ramón Iglesia noted in 1942 that Francisco López de Gómara was the first historian in the sixteenth century to introduce information that was not contained in Hernando Cortés's letters and to devote an entire volume solely to the conquest of Mexico.[1] López de Gómara's *La conquista de México*, he adds, was debated, censored, reedited several times, and translated into various languages.[2] Iglesia's observation explains why it remains an indispensable resource for studying the defeat of the Triple Alliance and the establishment of a colonial order in New Spain. López de Gómara's version of events may have been subject to question from its inception, but it became a standard early-modern narrative of Spanish imperial expansion in Mexico.[3] There is consensus among historians, for instance, that Bernal Díaz del Castillo owes much to López de Gómara. Some even read his *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* as a plagiarism of *La conquista de México*.[4] Yet borrowing from other sources without acknowledgment was common practice among sixteenth-century historians and was hardly shocking, least of all to López de Gómara, who composed his account in expectation that it would be reproduced and translated into various languages, including Latin.[5] The knowledge that others would pirate, cite, reproduce, translate, plagiarize, and rework his account into new texts came with his awareness of the importance of his work for his contemporaries.[6]

La conquista de México tells the story of Cortés's heroic excellence that, by transcending the bounds of the individual, brought a native American empire under Spanish dominion and consolidated Spanish control over most of Central Mexico. During the time López de Gómara

wrote his account of the conquest of Mexico, he completed his *Crónica de los corsarios Barbarroja*. This chronicle narrates the history of Khidr (known as Khayr ad-Din, d. 1546) and 'Aruj Barbarossa (d. 1518), the Barbary brothers who ravaged the European Mediterranean coasts. In his dedication, López de Gómara presents the two pieces as an ensemble, stating that he was writing of 'Aruj Barbarossa's deeds in order to make him Cortés's companion.[7] He thought of Cortés and 'Aruj as the greatest heroes of his time, whose military prowess had far-reaching consequences in the expansion of the two most powerful empires of the known world. While it is true that the Barbarossas and the Ottomans were the Spaniards' enemies, López de Gómara understood the evils the Spaniards had suffered in their war against the Turks as valuable historical lessons. He did not dismiss the Turks as religious and political enemies; rather, he deemed it better to recognize and learn from their achievements. Similarly, he believed that his European contemporaries failed to grasp the significance of Cortés's deeds or of the territories and peoples he had conquered. Therefore, he planned to publish both histories in Latin and Spanish in order to raise public awareness of these inadequately recognized stories. His goal was also to produce accounts according to the highest possible standards of truth and eloquence. In a world in which Latin was the language of knowledge, he—along with other Spanish intellectuals such as Pedro Mexía, Alejo Venegas, and fray Alonso Venero—deliberately wrote in his vernacular Castilian in order to "enrich their language and benefit their kingdom."[8] Thus, López de Gómara claims to share in a larger cultural project intended to transform Spain through new standards of language and deeper awareness of its place in the world.

FRANCISCO LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA AND HIS EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Little is known about López de Gómara's life, but the evidence reveals that he was part of an engaged and dynamic cohort of humanist intellectuals. Born February 11, 1511, in Gómara, a town in the province of Soria in Castilla la Vieja, he was probably ordained to the clergy in the diocese of Osma. He received his education from Pedro de Rua, a respected humanist scholar who resided and taught grammar at Soria's Colegiata de San Pedro (the city's collegiate church) between 1522 and 1556.[9] Nora Edith Jiménez presents compelling arguments that he joined fray García de Loaysa, bishop of Osma, as part of Charles V's imperial retinue at his coronation in Bologna by Pope Clement VII.[10] This is the most consistent explanation for his presence at the papal court at

age twenty. Jiménez argues that he probably came back to Spain with Loaysa and may have returned to Bologna sometime before May 17, 1536, when he was appointed chaplain of the College of San Clemente, a renowned institution that counted among its graduates prominent Spanish intellectuals of the time, such as Antonio de Nebrija and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda.[11] Although López de Gómara never became a student in the college himself, he developed close ties with many of his fellow Spaniards there. Jiménez, for instance, shows that Antonio Agustín, a student at the college, introduced López de Gómara to don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, the Count of Tendilla's son and Charles V's ambassador to Venice.[12] Don Diego was himself a humanist writer versed in Latin, Greek, and Arabic, an extraordinary book collector, and a patron of renowned writers and artists, including Pietro Aretino and Titian.[13] López de Gómara's stay with don Diego, whose diplomatic mission was to ensure that Venice remained on Spain's side in the war against the Ottoman Empire, may have contributed to impressing upon him the urgency of the Turkish threat in the Mediterranean. López de Gómara left Venice in 1541 to be present at the siege of Algiers led by the emperor, where he first met Hernando Cortés.[14]

The specific nature of López de Gómara's ties to Cortés is uncertain, but the *Crónica de los corsarios Barbarroja* and *La conquista de México* bear witness to his identification with the conquistador. His dedication in the *Crónica* to don Pedro Álvarez de Osorio, the Marquis of Astorga, asserts that he dared to send him his book because he was writing the history of Cortés, who had arranged to marry his daughter to don Pedro's son. In addition, López de Gómara could not have possibly composed *La conquista de México* without extensive consultation with the conquistador. The narrative validates Cortés's perspective and follows his steps so closely and in such detail as to make it at times difficult to distinguish the voice of the historian from that of the conquistador. Moreover, López de Gómara designed the plan of *Historia de las Indias* to highlight the conquest of Mexico as the most accomplished of all Spanish conquests in the Indies. Whether or not he served Cortés in some capacity, as Las Casas states,[15] López de Gómara certainly placed him at the center of his activities as a historian in 1545. This was perhaps the most exciting time in his intellectual life. Jiménez provides evidence indicating that López de Gómara was appointed court chaplain in 1547 and, save for a few interruptions, followed the court until shortly before his death.[16] She has documented his connections with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Jerónimo de Zurita, and Juan Páez de Castro during this time. However, his intellectual kinship with these historians did not translate into an appointment as chronicler or into royal support for living expenses. He spent the larger

part of his last years in the Low Countries with the court (1554–1558), enduring poverty and cancer, and in 1559 he finally returned to Soria to die.[17] Extant from this last period are his *Anales del emperador Carlos V* and *Guerras de mar del emperador Carlos V*, manuscripts he left among his personal possessions.[18] His relationship with Cortés certainly played a crucial role in his intellectual career, for López de Gómara most flourished between his trip to Argel in 1541 and the publication of the *Historia de las Indias* in 1552. This is the time when he formulates his most interesting views and main agenda as a historian.

In addition to Cortés, López de Gómara's relation with Pedro de Rua during this decade was quite meaningful. Rua's correspondence with Alvar Gómez de Castro in 1552 reveals that don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, by then Charles's ambassador to Pope Julius III (1550–1555), sent him Latin sources on the Numantine War (134 B.C.).[19] It seems evident that the book exchanges between Rua and Mendoza were not coincidental, but rather that López de Gómara must have introduced his old mentor to don Diego. This indicates that López de Gómara was part of a select intellectual network that engaged in exchanging sources and ideas. More important, perhaps, is the fact that López de Gómara adhered to Rua's criteria of truth and style in the writing of history. Pedro de Rua wrote several letters to the bishop of Mondoñedo, Antonio de Guevara, criticizing his historical writings for their loquacious style and many factual errors (largely inaccuracies in chronological, geographical, and biographical data as well as plainly made-up events and citations uncorroborated in the sources). Although Rua wrote these letters in 1540, they were not published until 1549. It is conceivable that López de Gómara read them in manuscript form before 1545, for his discussion of historical truth and style in the *Crónica de los corsarios Barbarroja* is very close to the views expressed by Rua in his letters. Moreover, López de Gómara cited Rua's letters in his *Anales* to back his statement that the bishop's work lacked quality.[20] The values that mentor and disciple shared with regard to writing style and historical accuracy were well grounded in the humanistic trends that prevailed in Spanish intellectual circles.

López de Gómara is well known for his elegant style, succinct expression, and narrative command. He claimed to be following the style in vogue when he described his book in the prefatory material in *Historia de las Indias* as unaffected, clear, and succinct.[21] Robert Lewis demonstrates that his prose followed the stylistic principles developed by the celebrated Spanish humanist Juan de Valdés in his *Diálogo de la lengua*.[22] First, as Lewis states, López de Gómara intended to write imitating *romance llano,* "Castilian speech," which other Renaissance scholars termed "natural language" referring to the courtly, spoken

language of the Castilian elite.[23] A second stylistic characteristic that López de Gómara and Valdés shared was their effort to convey as complex an idea as possible in each sentence, while limiting their words to a minimum. Other similar traits were the use of *refranes,* "sayings," as a succinct form of commentary and of coupled synonyms in order to emphasize or highlight specific meanings, as well as a preference for certain lexical choices that reflected their common humanist tendencies. As Lewis points out, López de Gómara deviates from the standard only in that he makes puns a constant feature of his speech.

López de Gómara's historical method focused on the examination of trustworthy documents and informants. However, his veracity was severely criticized by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Pedro de la Gasca, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega.[24] All three claimed that López de Gómara relied heavily on biased oral testimonies and did not bother to search for other points of view. Inca Garcilaso de la Vega relates a particularly vivid encounter between López de Gómara and a conquistador who confronted the historian because of his offensive remarks about Francisco de Carvajal: López de Gómara's reply was to blame his informant for providing him with biased information. He anticipated this scenario with amazing clairvoyance in the *Crónica de los corsarios Barbarroja,* in which he acknowledged that those who take part in wars usually do not convey the events as they happen.[25] López de Gómara openly contemplated the possibility of writing a false account of the events; however, he accepted the version of those "who know best" in order to produce an authoritative account. In other words, he followed the testimony of those witnesses he perceived to be more reliable in terms of their "knowledge," which he likely assessed by their social and political standing as much as by their roles as participants in the events.[26] More important than factual truth was for him a rational judgment of human actions, which he considered was not subject to *opinión*, "perspective," but rather imprinted by nature on humankind.[27]

FRANCISCO LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA AND LA CONQUISTA DE MÉXICO

López de Gómara most likely began working on *La conquista* after making Cortés's acquaintance. Cortés is known to have held intellectual gatherings attended by humanist scholars such as Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and Pedro de Navarra.[28] This thriving cultural life was certainly a propitious environment for López de Gómara's historiographical endeavors. Moreover, the gatherings at Cortés's

home gave López de Gómara the opportunity to compile testimonies, ask questions, and gather additional information about the events that occurred in the course of the conquest of Mexico. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda describes in *De Orbe Novo* a private meeting that took place at Cortés's house in Valladolid, where Cortés narrated the massacre at Cholola to Charles V.[29] One can only imagine the pleasure Sepúlveda said he felt when he heard Cortés tell the story to the emperor, embellishing every detail, relishing every deliberation, going over every word exchanged with enemies and allies, perhaps even delivering his famous harangues to the mesmerized audience.

López de Gómara's relationship with Cortés certainly was one of the key factors influencing his composition of *La conquista de México*. While this does not necessarily imply that the historian lacked critical distance from the conquistador, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo and fray Bartolomé de las Casas were the first to denounce López de Gómara's bias in favor of Cortés—the latter claiming that the conqueror himself had dictated what the historian wrote.[30] It is known that on March 4, 1553, don Martín Cortés made a payment of 500 ducats to López de Gómara for *La conquista de México*.[31] Although we do not know who commissioned the work, there is nonetheless good evidence that López de Gómara worked with a degree of independence. He undoubtedly made extensive use of Cortés's letters and oral testimonies, but he also alludes to conversations he had with Andrés de Tapia and mentions other unnamed oral sources. The evidence shows that he used written sources such as Andrés de Tapia's *Relación*, Pedro de Alvarado's reports on Cortés's expedition to Utlatlan, and Motolinia's *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*.[32] However, these sources reveal little about López de Gómara's reliance on Cortés's writings or testimony when he composed *La conquista de México*.

López de Gómara's goal was to present a flattering portrait of Cortés. Yet, he also openly examined events that had blemished the conquest. One example of this tendency is López de Gómara's account of the massacre at the *Templo Mayor*, "Great Temple," during the festival of Toxcatl. In his second letter to Charles V, Hernando Cortés had omitted any reference to the massacre carried out by Pedro de Alvarado, instead blaming Pánfilo de Narváez for the ensuing Mexica uprising in Tenochtitlan.[33] López de Gómara reiterates the notion that Narváez had instigated Moteuczoma to rebel, but clearly states that the massacre was the main cause for the rebellion. His account of Alvarado's massacre does much more than simply set the story straight; the incident as told in *La conquista de México* had profound legal implications. López de Gómara recounts that Alvarado himself had first authorized the indig-

enous celebrations and, without provocation, later decided to slaughter the unarmed Mexica nobles who were dancing.[34]

In addition, he cites two divergent explanations for Alvarado's actions: first, some claimed that Alvarado had been warned that the Mexica were plotting an uprising; and, second, others stated that the Spaniards observing the Mexica dances saw fit to kill them in order to steal their gold ornaments. In the first case, Alvarado acted out of fear against unarmed enemies without following any of the judicial procedures Cortés normally used to justify his massacres or other exemplary punishments. In the second explanation, the massacre was an outright act of tyranny in the legal and political sense, since it involved the killing of the innocent to satisfy the Spaniards' greed. While the second motivation is worse than the first, in both cases, the massacre lacked justification, and the text makes it clear that Cortés must have been unhappy with such a deed, but felt forced to overlook the incident, not wanting to upset his soldiers whose help he needed to contain the uprising. The author must have been well aware that Las Casas had used the episode to argue before the Council of the Indies in 1542 that it gave the Mexica just cause to rise up against the Spaniards, but this did not prevent López de Gómara from exposing the incident.[35]

Moreover, he was highly critical of Cortés's treatment of Quauhtemoc, the last Mexica *tlatoani*, "ruler," to rule an independent Tenochtitlan. He first criticizes Cortés's torture of Quauhtemoc in an effort to uncover the whereabouts of Moteuczoma's treasure, adding that Cortés had been charged for this act in his *residencia,* "an investigation into the conduct of affairs of an official at the conclusion of his term of office," proceedings.[36] By citing accusations that Cortés had acted out of greed and cruelty, López de Gómara exposes the conquistador to charges of tyranny and despotism. To assume the legitimate role of leader, Cortés had to act on behalf of the common good; indeed, this had been his own justification in betraying Diego Velázquez and claiming the right to govern New Spain. But when motivated by self-interest (his greed for gold), Cortés unlawfully harmed an indigenous lord (he tortured Motecuzoma not to achieve justice, but to find treasure) and acted as a tyrant. Therefore, López de Gómara concludes that what the Spaniards obtained from these actions was infamy rather than gold.[37] A number of contemporary examples reveal that the affected parties took this kind of statement seriously.[38] López de Gómara possibly thought no harm would be done once Cortés was dead, his residencia long over, and his services already rewarded by the emperor. However, he certainly adhered to his own standards of truth and did not hesitate to include information that could undermine his own case.

WHY DID CONQUESTS MATTER?

Cortés's seigniorial aspirations are undoubtedly the common thread in López de Gómara's *La conquista de México*. Conquistadors wanted to be lords. A concern for honor (as a means to establish both social rank and prestige) attracted the attention of a diverse group of readers in the Indies to conquest accounts: an aged conquistador such as Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a mestizo writer such as Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and a Nahua historian such as Chimalpahin. All three writers amended López de Gómara's account where he failed to grant due honor to those whose reputation these historians sought to protect. After all, honor, with all the various rights of precedence it involved, had been the focus of the most meaningful power struggles within the Spanish empire. If identity mattered at all to Spaniards, it was tied to the reputations of individuals and peoples—and to the claims their descendants could make. Honor ran parallel to social hierarchy in Spain and its colonies, and therefore constituted the language in which the rights of Spaniards and Indians alike were debated.[39]

Matters of honor may explain the 17 November 1553 prohibition of López de Gómara's *Historia de las Indias*. Although it was issued in Valladolid on behalf of Prince Philip, it is important to note that the book's original printing license had also been granted in the prince's name.[40] A clue to the source of the prohibition may be the fact that the *cédula*, "royal decree," ordered all copies gathered and taken to the Council of the Indies. Moreover, Juan de Samano, secretary of the Council of the Indies, countersigned it. On 8 January 1554, when the decree was publicly proclaimed in Seville, Licenciado Villagómez from the Council of the Indies appeared before Luis de Varsuto, a public notary, who notarized statements by twelve booksellers listing the number of copies of the book they possessed. A reasonable explanation for the Council's actions was that there was something in the book that the authorities perceived as harmful. The two main possibilities were that the author had put forth a doctrinal error or that he had compromised someone's honor; in the context of sixteenth-century polemics on colonization, both were likely.[41] In fact, López de Gómara's account damaged the reputation of both the Indians and the conquistadors at one point or another. The renowned seventeenth-century bibliographer Antonio de León Pinelo characterizes the book as *historia libre*, "history at large," most likely meaning that the author spoke freely without concern for the consequences of what he stated.[42]

López de Gómara composed an account that damaged many people's reputations, either by depicting their actions negatively or by ignoring

them altogether. He portrayed the indigenous peoples in New Spain as inferior to the Spaniards, but he also expressed admiration for what he regarded as their cultural achievements and even sometimes their actions in their wars against the Spaniards. In a sense, López de Gómara's writing stood to be corrected from its inception. As his dedication in the *Crónica de los corsarios Barbarroja* clearly states, he recognized that historical truth was always evasive and that all the historian could faithfully pursue was what he learned from reason. The type of reason he meant was open to discussion among the various peoples who confronted each other in warfare in his times: Spaniards as well as Turks, North Africans, and Mexica. Seeking to elevate his fellow Spaniards to lordly status, López de Gómara also described the contest over world dominance in terms not always favorable to them. He was perhaps overconfident that his readers would, in the end, agree with his claims of Spanish supremacy, and thus gave his detractors the ammunition they needed to come back at him.

No doubt López de Gómara took it for granted that his readers, to whom he sought to convey the significance of the Spaniards' deeds, would seek out his work mainly to learn about *las marauillas, y gra[n] deza de las Indias,* "the marvels and greatness of the Indies."[43] His was clearly a history not written with a native audience in mind. One could argue, however, that rather than silencing or excluding Indians, López de Gómara unintentionally created a common ground wherein a Nahua historian such as Chimalpahin could claim a stake in this history. Symptomatic of the type of dialogue that his work enabled was his warning to potential translators not to change the spellings of indigenous or Spanish proper names so that they would not corrupt the names of their lineages. Since native allies had joined forces with the Spaniards during the conquest, preserving the spelling of indigenous names was not just a matter of linguistic purity; rather, it involved the creation and preservation of lineages. Ironically, although he sometimes confused the spelling of place and lineage names himself, López de Gómara's narrative was one of entitlement, a story to support the claims of the people who "owned" or stood to "inherit" the deeds that were told, but also one that inscribed those same names and preserved those same lineages.

CONCLUSION

Iglesia's correct assessment of the centrality of *La conquista de México* among early historical sources for the conquest of Mexico helps us understand an intellectual dialogue that was circumscribed to the languages of

Western Europe. Here, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra's claim that sixteenth-century Spanish historians listened to indigenous voices falls short of making the case for a reasoned cultural dialogue between Europeans and natives.[44] While the discussion did not ignore the existence of indigenous sources, it always excluded the possibility of an indigenous reply on equal footing. In other words, indigenous informants and authors were not treated as authoritative interlocutors taking part in a dialogue, but mostly as sources of information to be processed from outside their context of enunciation. Chimalpahin's transcription of *La conquista de México*, however, helps us grasp what such a dialogue might have looked like. He highlighted Nahua participation in the conquest effort, granted recognition to relevant names and lineages of key indigenous individuals, and stood up for their honor and that of many Nahua polities. In this sense, Chimalpahin rewrote López de Gómara's text in a manner in which it was not supposed to be rewritten, and thereby opened up fields of signification never contemplated in the original.

Scholars who acknowledge López de Gómara as a historian of the Spanish conquest do so based on the elegance of his prose, his rich humanistic culture, and the moral qualities apparent in his writing, such as his independence of judgment, his candor, and straightforwardness.[45] In contrast, his social elitism, his imperialistic ideology, and the errors he committed have aroused passionate criticism.[46] Others have attempted to understand his work, with its merits and limitations, as the intellectual endeavor of a sixteenth-century historian.[47] Nonetheless, in all these divergent readings, the cultural texts and the traditions considered relevant in order to discuss his work remain the same and are similarly well-grounded in the tradition of European colonial writing. Not surprisingly, then, the question of how to study *La conquista de México* outside this framework has not received due attention, given the scarcity of critical tools and resources to make such a reading meaningful. Now, nearly five hundred years after the conquest, Chimalpahin's "Conquista de Mexico" is finally providing us the opportunity to explore other possibilities.

NOTES

1. *Cronistas e historiadores de la conquista de México: El ciclo de Hernán Cortés* (México: El Colegio de México, 1942), 97.

2. The classical studies on the subject are Henry Raup Wagner, *Francisco López de Gómara: La Historia de las Indias y Conquista de México* (Berkeley, CA: J. J. Gillick & Co., 1924) and Robert Lewis, "The Humanistic Historiogra-

phy of Francisco López de Gómara (1511–1559)" (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1983).

3. Key critics of López de Gómara's *La conquista de México* were Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, fray Bartolomé de las Casas, and Bernal Díaz del Castillo. For an assessment of the reception of López de Gómara's work in the sixteenth century, see Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera, *Histories of Infamy: Francisco López de Gómara and the Ethics of Spanish Imperialism,* trans. Scott Sessions (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005), 1–19, 46–68.

4. The first to establish a correlation between the *Historia verdadera* and López de Gómara's *La conquista de México* was Ramón Iglesia, "Las críticas de Bernal Díaz del Castillo a la *Historia de la conquista de México*, de López de Gómara," *El hombre Colón y otros ensayos* (México: El Colegio de México, 1944), 77–96. More recently, authors reading Díaz del Castillo as systematically plagiarizing and expanding López de Gómara include Francis J. Brooks, "Motecuzoma Xocoyotl, Hernán Cortés, and Bernal Díaz del Castillo: The Construction of an Arrest," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 75:2 (1995), 149–83, and John A. Ochoa, "The Paper Warrior: Education, Independence, and Bernal Díaz's War to Stop Time," *Modern Language Notes* 114:2 (1999), 341–56.

5. López de Gómara foresaw that his work would be translated into multiple languages and advised readers not to bother translating his work into Latin, as he had already begun that undertaking. See his *Historia de las Indias y Conquista de México*, vol. 1 (Çaragoça: Agustín Millán, 1552), f. [2]r. López de Gómara initially published his work in two complementary parts: the first was of a general nature and dealt with the larger history of Spanish explorations and conquest of the Indies, and the second part specifically highlighted the uniqueness of the conquest of Mexico and the deeds of Hernando Cortés. Later, the set became known as *La historia general de las Indias* ("first and second part" on the title page of Millán's 1553 edition) and *Hispania victrix* (in the 1553 Medina del Campo pirated edition by Guillermo Millis).

6. Translations of *La conquista de México* appeared as early as 1556 in Italian (Rome: Valerio and Luigi Dorici), 1578 in English (London: Henry Bynneman), and 1588 in French (Paris: Abel L'Angelier).

7. Francisco López de Gómara, *Crónica de los corsarios Barbarroja* (Madrid: Polifemo, 1989), 15. López de Gómara stresses the parallelism between the lives of Cortés and 'Aruj in the *Crónica,* to the point of attributing to 'Aruj his brother's role in the expansion of the Ottoman empire. In addition, the historian specifically compares Cortés to 'Aruj in *Historia de las Indias y Conquista de México*, vol. 2: f. 26v. For another comparison between Cortés and the Barbarossa brothers, see Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, "Cortés y los hermanos Barbarrojas, vidas paralelas en los escritos de Francisco López de Gómara," *Revista de Indias* 47:181 (1987): 901–6.

8. Ibid., 19.

9. Florentino Zamora Lucas and Víctor Higes Cuevas, *El bachiller Pedro de Rua* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1957), 85. Rua was a member of Soria's collegiate church, that is, a church organized in the

same way as a cathedral church, without jurisdiction over a diocese's government. See also Lewis, "Humanistic Historiography," 23–24.

10. Nora Edith Jiménez, *Francisco López de Gómara: Escribir historias en tiempos de Carlos V* (Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán e Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2001), 43–47.

11. Ibid., 50–63.

12. Ibid., 85–87. In *Crónica*, 112, López de Gómara alludes to his stay in Venice with don Diego. See also Lewis, "Humanistic Historiography," 30, 31.

13. Jiménez, *Francisco López*, 81–89.

14. According to Lewis, "Humanistic Historiography," 31–33, sometime after this event López de Gómara became Cortés's chaplain and remained in his company until the conquistador's death in 1547. Nora Edith Jiménez questions this assumption, arguing that López de Gómara's name is never mentioned in Cortés's testament or his accounting documents.

15. See Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* in *Obras completas*, 14 vols. (Madrid: Alianza, 1988–1998), 5:1870–71.

16. Jiménez, *Francisco López*, 110.

17. Ibid., 123–29.

18. Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra and Nora Edith Jiménez have edited a manuscript copy of López de Gómara's *Guerras de mar del emperador Carlos V* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2000). This text differs from the *Crónica* in content and perspective, particularly in its emphasis on Spain's struggle for the Mediterranean. López de Gómara (*Guerras*, 53) states that he eliminated "Barbarrojas" from the book's title following advice from Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, which suggests that *Guerras* may be a more politically appropriate rewriting of the *Crónica,* in an effort to make it suitable for a courtly audience.

19. Zamora Lucas and Higes Cuevas, *El bachiller*, 102. The sources are Apiano's *De Bello Numantino* and another account of the Numantine War by Polibius. Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus's razing of Numantia was legendary in the history of Spain and had captured Rua's imagination.

20. Francisco López de Gómara, *Annals of the Emperor Charles V*, ed. and trans. Roger Bigelow Merriman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 122.

21. López de Gómara, *Historia de las Indias*, 1: f. [2]r.

22. Robert Lewis, "Retórica y verdad: Los cargos de Bernal Díaz a López de Gómara," in *De la crónica a la nueva narrativa mexicana: Coloquio sobre literatura mexicana*, ed. Merlín H. Forster and Julio Ortega (Oaxaca: Oasis, 1986), 41–43.

23. In the printed edition, López de Gómara's text is heavily punctuated in order to create small, discrete units, sometimes followed by verbless clauses to reflect the so-called natural speech.

24. Roa-de-la-Carrera, *Histories of Infamy*, 61–63.

25. López de Gómara, *Crónica*, 16.

26. Hence the perspectives of indigenous participants, foot soldiers, or rebels such as Carvajal could hardly have made their way into his records.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Demetrio Ramos Pérez, *Ximénez de Quesada en su relación con los cronistas y el* Epítome de la conquista del Nuevo Reino de Granada (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos de Sevilla, 1972), 113–14; and Lewis, "Humanistic Historiography," 33–34.

29. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, ed. and trans. Antonio Ramírez de Verger (Madrid: Alianza, 1987), 142–43.

30. Roa-de-la-Carrera, *Histories of Infamy*, 48–49.

31. Lewis, "Humanistic Historiography," 330.

32. See Henry Raup Wagner, *Francisco López de Gómara and His Works*, proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, 58 (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1949), 264–68; Jorge Gurría Lacroix, "Prólogo," in Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias y vida de Hernán Cortés* (Caracas: Ayacucho, 1979), 2:xii–xv; and Lewis, "Humanistic Historiography," 108–12. López de Gómara cites his conversations with Andrés de Tapia in his description of the *tzompantli*, but he also makes references to statements by unnamed sources that contradict the version that he privileges, such as when he dismisses allegations that Cortés left Mexico Tenochtitlan stealthily on July 1, 1520, without organizing his army to depart from the city.

33. Hernando Cortés omits any explanation for the uprising itself but hints at Narváez's culpability by indicating that Narváez wrote to Moteuczoma stating that he had come to capture Cortés and his people and to free the land. He adds that some Indians informed him that "tenían acordado que si a mí el dicho Narváez prendiese . . . entre tanto ellos matarían a los que yo en la cibdad dejaba, como lo acometieron" [they had agreed that if Narváez captured me they would meanwhile kill those I had left in the city, as they set out to do]. See Hernan Cortés, *Cartas de relación,* ed. Ángel Delgado Gómez (Madrid: Castalia, 1993), 258, 265, 266.

34. López de Gómara, *Historia de las Indias*, vol. 2: f. 103v.

35. Fray Bartolomé de las Casas put forth this argument in the *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, in *Obras completas*, 10:51. Henry Raup Wagner and Helen Rand Parish, *The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 108–13, show that Las Casas read an earlier manuscript version of the *Brevísima* before the Council of the Indies in 1542 in order to make his case against the conquistadors. López de Gómara was aware of Las Casas's role in the 1542 administrative and legal reforms, as his account on indigenous legislation reveals. See the chapter titled "De la libertad de los Indios," *Historia de las Indias*, vol. 1: f. 118r.

36. López de Gómara, *La historia de las Indias*, vol. 2: f. 86v.

37. Ibid., vol. 2: f. 103v.

38. The diatribes of Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and don Francisco Arias Dávila against López de Gómara over matters of honor provide a case in point. See Roa-de-la-Carrera, *Histories of Infamy*, 62–67.

39. Fray Bartolomé de las Casas framed his defense of the Indians in the *Apologética historia sumaria* as a refutation of the infamy that the Spaniards had brought upon the Indians. At stake in his argument were the Indians' rights of dominion. See his *Obras completas*, 6:285–86. Similarly, Antonio de Herrera

refused to make changes to his account when sued by the Conde de Puñonrrostro in 1602 because he understood that, as a royal chronicler, he had an obligation to protect the honor of Spain against charges of greed and cruelty. See Roa-de-la-Carrera, *Histories of Infamy*, 192.

40. José Toribio Medina, *Biblioteca hispanoamericana, 1493–1810*, 7 vols. (Santiago: Fondo Histórico y Bibliográfico José Toribio Medina, 1958–1962), 1:262–65, transcribes the cédula. The 1552 edition includes two references to the license. See López de Gómara, *Historia de las Indias*, vol. 1: f. [1]v, vol. 2: f. [140]r.

41. On the unfolding of these struggles, see Rolena Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

42. Antonio de León Pinelo, *Epitome de la biblioteca oriental i occidental, nautica i geografica* (Madrid: Juan González, 1629), 70.

43. López de Gómara, *Historia de las Indias*, vol. 1: f. [2]r.

44. Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance. Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 125–216, frames this issue in terms of Johannes Fabian's "denial of coevalness." European writers who worked within medieval and humanistic traditions appropriated indigenous sources, reinscribing their contents within their own genres and systems for recording and transmitting information, thereby foreclosing the viability of an indigenous voice that operated within incompatible cultural patterns. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 92, has argued that "Spanish colonialism in America in the sixteenth century was thus far from being solely an effort at cultural extermination. . . . [S]ixteenth-century Spanish historians in the New World exhibited greater sensibility and greater willingness to listen to the voices of non-European 'subalterns' than would be the case later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries." Cañizares-Esguerra, however, misses the point in that a meaningful cross-cultural communication, more than just listening, requires creating a shared space for mutual communication and understanding. In this sense, indigenous voices remained excluded.

45. See Iglesia, *Cronistas*, Lewis, "Humanistic Historiography"; David A. Brading, *The First America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 45–50; and José Durand, "Gómara: Encrucijada," *Historia Mexicana* 2:2 (October–December 1952): 210–22.

46. A good example of this type of critical reading is that of Jonathan Loesberg, "Narratives of Authority: Cortés, Gómara, Díaz," *Prose Studies* 6:3 (1983): 239–63.

47. Joaquín Ramírez Cabañas, "Introducción," in Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de la conquista de México*, 2 vols. (México: Ed. Pedro Robredo, 1943), 1:9–34, and Glen Carman, "The Voices of the Conqueror in López de Gómara's *Historia de la conquista de México*," *Journal of Hispanic Philology*

16:2 (1992): 223–36, and *Rhetorical Conquests: Cortés, Gómara, and Renaissance Imperialism* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2006). More recently, Nora Edith Jiménez has significantly expanded and enriched this tradition with her *Francisco López*, a comprehensive study of the *Historia de las Indias* and its author.

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THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO

Written by don Domingo de San Antón Muñón [Chimalpahin] Quauhtlehuanitzin

(f. 1)[1] **Chapter** 1. The Birth of Hernando Cortés

Hernando Cortés was born in Medellín [Extremadura] in 1485 during the reign of Fernando and Isabel, the Catholic Monarchs of Castile and Aragon.[2] His father was Martín Cortés de Monroy and his mother, doña Catalina Pizarro Altamirano. Both parents came from noble stock, since all four lineages—Cortés, Monroy, Pizarro, and Altamirano—are ancient and honorable. Although they owned little in the way of property, they attained much honor, as rarely happens but to those who lead a good life. Not only were they respected by their neighbors for the kindness and Christian behavior **they observed** in them, they themselves were **pleased** [LdeG: proud] that their conduct in all their **affairs,** [LdeG: words], and actions was honorable, for which they were held in high regard and loved by all. **The mother**, who was very religious, [LdeG: chaste], **and charitable, became pregnant and gave birth to a son whom they named Hernando. He was sickly as a child, so his parents**[3]

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1. Note the omission of López de Gómara's (LdeG hereinafter) 1552 dedication to don Martín Cortés, marqués del Valle, and the omission of LdeG's introduction. For reference purposes, and following Chimalpahin, we have corrected and/or added sequential chapter numbers to LdeG's unnumbered chapter titles. Note also that the chapter title is in handwriting and ink other than that used in the manuscript.

2. Hugh Thomas, *Who's Who of the Conquistadors* (London: Cassel, 2000), xii, has examined five unpublished testimonies by Cortés, one of which indicates with certainty that the conqueror was born in 1482, not 1485.

3. [LdeG: strong and thrifty. He was devout and charitable. As a young man, he went to war as lieutenant of a cavalry unit under his relative Alonso de Hermosa, captain under

cast lots among the Twelve Apostles to see which would serve as his protector. After San Pedro, the last lot and chosen Apostle, was offered several masses and prayers, it pleased God to cure the boy. From that moment, Cortés took Jesus Christ's glorious Apostle San Pedro as his special protector and no matter where he was he made certain to celebrate the saint's day every year at church and at home.

When Cortés was fourteen years old, his parents sent him to Salamanca to study, where he remained for two years learning grammar in the home of Francisco Núñez de Valera, who was married to Inés de Paz, his father's sister. He returned to Medellín because he was tired of studying or perhaps for lack of money. His parents were angry and upset (f. 1v) that he decided to do this since they wished him to pursue a career in law, [LdeG: prosperous and honorable above all the rest], because of his intelligence and ability in all areas.

He fought bitterly with his parents, displaying the loud, unruly, and arrogant attitude[4] **typical of young boys, and left home determined to see the world. Of the two paths that he saw before him, one led to Italy and the war being fought in Naples against the French by Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, who was known as the "Great Captain."**[5] **The other path led to the island of Cuba, where Comendador [fray Nicolás de] Ovando was being dispatched** [LdeG: to the Indies] **as governor.**[6] **Ovando was a friend or acquaintance of Cortés's father, although had Cortés gone to Naples, he would also have had friends and relatives there.** One night, while Ovando prepared for his departure and readied the fleet that he was to command, Cortés was walking atop a weakly supported rear wall

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Alonso de Monroy, treasurer of the Order of Alcántara. Monroy desired to assume the office of *maestre*, "master" or "superior" of the order against the queen's wishes. For this reason, don Alonso de Cárdenas, maestre of the Order of Santiago, opposed him. Hernando Cortés was such a sickly child that he was often close to death. However, he was cured through a devotional act made by María de Esteban, his wet nurse, who came from Oliva. The devotional act was to]

4. [LdeG: and was quarrelsome. For this reason, he decided to leave. Two roads opened before him, which suited his purposes and inclinations. One led to Naples with Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, called "The Great Captain." The other led to the Indies with Nicolás de Ovando, Comendador of Lares, who went there as a governor. He weighed which of the two would be best for him. In the end, he decided to go to the Indies, because Ovando knew him and would protect him. He also was keener on going there than to Naples, because of the great quantity of gold brought from there.]

5. For more on Fernández de Córdoba's exploits in Naples, see Bert S. Hall, *Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe* (Baltimore, 1997), 166–70.

6. Chimalpahin (C. hereinafter) is in error; Ovando was being dispatched as governor in Hispaniola. His full title was Comendador de Lares of the Order of Alcántara. Hugh Thomas, *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico* (New York, 1993), 66.

in order to talk to a woman when the wall collapsed beneath him, plunging him to the ground. At the noise of the falling wall and Cortés's arms and shield, a newlywed man came to his door and found Cortés outside. Suspecting his wife, the man tried to kill Cortés, but an old woman who was his mother-in-law prevented him from doing so. Cortés was injured by his fall and also contracted a fever[7] that lasted a long time, so he could not leave with Governor Ovando. After he recovered he decided to leave for Italy as he had at first considered. He started out on the road to Valencia, but never made it to Italy. Instead, he wandered around, although not without suffering hardship and privation. He returned to Medellín about a year later, determined to set sail to the Indies. His parents gave him both their blessing and some money **to spend on the way.**

Chapter 2. Cortés's Age When He Sailed to the Indies

Cortés was **fifteen or almost eighteen years old** [LdeG: nineteen years old when in the year of our Lord of 1594, he went to the Indies] and despite his age, he ventured to go [LdeG: so far by himself] **to the island of Santo Domingo,**[8] **where Ovando served as governor. He managed to arrange the trip with a pilot whose name I do not know,**[9] **setting sail with the other ships that went with** [LdeG: He boarded a ship belonging to] Alonso Quintero.[10] **When he arrived at** Sanlúcar de Barrameda **he stayed on board until they reached** [LdeG: until La Gomera, one of the Canary Islands], where they procured food and water [LdeG: that would be sufficient for such a lengthy trip]. Driven by greed, Alonso Quintero set off by himself, saying nothing to his (f. 2) companions in order to arrive sooner at Santo Domingo and sell his merchandise faster and at a higher price than theirs. But after setting sail, such foul weather came upon them that the ship's mast broke. Forced to return to La Gomera, he begged the others **(**who had not yet left**)**[11] to wait for him until he fixed the mast. They then all set

7. *Cuartana*, "a four-day fever," began to subside after the fourth day of illness and was said to be caused by a "melancholic humor." Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Madrid, 1994), 371.

8. The island was Hispaniola. Santo Domingo was the first permanent city in the Caribbean. It is the capital of the Dominican Republic and advantageously located on the important Río Osama.

9. Note that both C. and LdeG employ the first-person reference in this narrative.

10. [LdeG: a resident of Palos de Moguer who was going in a convoy with another four ships with merchandise. The ships sailed handily from Sanlúcar de Barrameda]. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 374, states that Quintero was known to have many dealings with the Genoese and to have transported one, if not several, ships filled with goods to Santo Domingo.

11. This is the first of numerous parenthetical additions by C.

sail together across a great stretch of sea within sight of each other. Quintero again saw an opportunity to pull ahead of the fleet, hoping to gain speed so he could make a profit. Since the pilot Francisco Niño de Huelva did not know how to steer the ship, **their arrival was late and untimely**, and they could not make out where they were. The sailors were dumbfounded, and the pilot dejected **and distressed**. The **sailors and** passengers began crying, as they did not know the course [LdeG: they had taken] or what to do. **Believing they would all die, they** [LdeG: Since they were bickering among themselves, the commander] blamed the pilot, who in turn blamed the commander. With dwindling supplies **and nothing to eat or drink**, they drank only rainwater [LdeG: and all confessed]. Some cursed their fate [LdeG: and others begged for mercy, awaiting the death that some had already accepted] **and their decision to sail**; others feared coming ashore in the land of the Caribs, who **were known to** eat human flesh. Amid these tribulations they saw one day at sunset a dove alight on the **mast** [LdeG: yard arm, and this happened on Good Friday]. Taking this as an omen that land was near and crying with joy and comforting one another, they celebrated and gave thanks to God. The sailors steered the ship in the direction of the dove's flight. When the bird disappeared, they were all saddened; but they never lost hope that they would soon see land. On Easter Sunday, they sighted the island of Hispaniola. One of the lookouts by the name of Cristóbal Zurco[12] cried out, "Land! Land!" a word that both comforts and delights seafarers. The pilot recognized Punta de Samaná, and in three or four days they achieved their goal to land at Santo Domingo, where the other four ships had arrived many days before.

Chapter 3. Hernando Cortés's Stay in Santo Domingo

Governor Ovando was not in the city when Cortés arrived at Santo Domingo. His secretary, a man named Medina, welcomed him as his host. He told him about the situation on the island and what Cortés needed to do. He recommended that Cortés make his home there; he would be given **a lot**[13] **on which to build houses** and land to farm. Cortés, anticipating **more lofty gains** [LdeG: getting his hands on gold quickly], thought little of it, since he would rather search for gold **and riches**. **After a few days, he met with the governor, who was happy to see him.**

12. [LdeG: Zorço]. Zarza in Francisco López de Gómara, *Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by his Secretary*, ed. and trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley, 1964), 10; hereinafter LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson).

13. LdeG uses *caballería*, "approx. 105 acres," which is considerably larger than a *solar*, or "lot."

[LdeG: Medina asked Cortés to reconsider, for the search for gold was both joyful and onerous. When the governor returned,] Cortés kissed his hands and spent a good amount of time responding to his questions (f. 2v) for news of Extremadura.[14] **Shortly thereafter, the governor appointed him lieutenant of several Jamaican and Irarima provinces. Diego Velázquez, the governor of Cuba,[15] was recruiting people to fight against several rebellious provinces that were being led by a great female ruler of the lands known as Daiguaio.**[16] Ovando named Cortés *escribano*, "notary," of the *cabildo*, "town council," of Azúa,[17] where Cortés then lived for five or six years engaged in commercial enterprises. Around this time, Cortés decided to depart with Diego de Nicuesa for Veragua **(**a place fabled for its riches**)**.[18] He was, however, unable to leave because of an abscess behind his right knee, which saved his life, or at least spared him much hardship and many of the dangers in which others who went there found themselves, as we shall tell in this history.[19]

Chapter 4. Some Things that Happened to Cortés in Cuba

In 1511 the governor of the Indies, Admiral don Diego Colón,[20] sent Diego Velázquez[21] to conquer Cuba with a consignment of the requisite

14. [LdeG: He stayed because of what Ovando told him. Shortly thereafter, he left for the war Diego Velázquez waged against Aniguayagua, Guacayarima, and other provinces, which had not yet been pacified due to the rebellion led by Anacaona, a great female ruler and a widow. Ovando granted him some Indians in Daiguao and]

15. Diego Velázquez had yet to launch the campaign to subdue Cuba and its inhabitants. Once accomplished, however, he served as lieutenant governor in Cuba under don Diego Colón for several years. His name may well have been spelled Velásquez, that is, "son of Velasco," but we have retained Velázquez, following LdeG's usage.

16. According to Thomas, *Conquest*, 132, and LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 10, Daiguaio was the name of the place and indigenous peoples that Cortés received in *encomienda*, "a grant of natives for labor and tribute purposes."

17. Azúa de Compostela, Hispaniola, in Thomas, *Conquest*, 132–35.

18. This expedition was headed for Darién, known today as Panama.

19. Presumably, this reference and elsewhere is to LdeG's *Historia de las Indias* (Çaragoça, 1552).

20. Early *adelantados*, "provincial administrators," and governors in the Indias were Admiral Cristóbal Colón and Bartolomé Colón, c. 1492–1499; Francisco de Bobadilla, 1499–1502; fray Nicolás de Ovando, 1502–1509; Admiral don Diego Colón, 1509–1516; four Hieronymite friars (fray Luis de Figueroa, fray Bernardino de Manzanedo, fray Alonso de Santo Domingo, and fray Juan de Salvatierra, 1516–1519); and Judge Rodrigo de Figueroa, 1519–1520. Another definition of adelantado during the encounters phase was that of an honorific title given to commanders of conquering expeditions.

21. Thomas, *Conquest*, 76, adds that Velázquez was from a very good family in Cuéllar, Castile, and joined Columbus (Cristóbal Colón) on his second voyage. He soon became

manpower, arms, and other equipment. Hernando Cortés joined the conquest as an official of the treasurer, Miguel de Pasamonte, to keep the accounts of the king's fifth and treasure. **Diego Velázquez also invited him, given his diligence, ability, and luck, and so he benefited from Velázquez's division of the spoils. As his share of the conquest, he was allotted a town or *estancias*[22] in partnership with his brother-in-law. The first settler, Cortés did brisk business as a cattle and sheep rancher in Santiago de Cuba, which became heavily populated. He did not rest but worked hard managing**[23] the foundry and a hospital, **in addition to his growing livestock enterprise**. Juan Suárez, a native of Granada, brought [LdeG: to Cuba] three or four of his sisters and his mother, all of whom had gone to Santo Domingo in 1509 with the viceroy's wife, doña María de Toledo.[24] The women hoped to marry rich men, for they were poor, and one, **doña** Catalina,[25] insisted that she was to be a great lady. She had either dreamed or heard it from an astrologer, even though it was said that her mother predicted many things.

The Suárez sisters were attractive, (f. 3) and as there were few Spanish women, they were much sought after. Cortés pursued Catalina, finally marrying her after first getting into trouble and being sent to jail for having refused to keep his promise of marriage to her, which she demanded of him. A womanizer himself, Diego Velázquez sided with Catalina because of his love for her sister, despite [the latter's] bad reputation. A number of men—Baltasar Bermúdez,[26] Juan Suárez, the two

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one of the richest men living in the Caribbean and led the wars against the natives. He then was in charge of colonizing Cuba and later became its governor.

22. Sections of land set aside for the raising of livestock, or a subunit of an indigenous polity that is located at a distance from the center of activity.

23. [LdeG: In the division of spoils that Diego Velázquez made after his conquest of the island, he gave Cortés and Juan Suárez, his brother-in-law, the Indians of Manicarao. Cortés lived in Santiago de Baracoa, which was the first settlement on the island. He raised cattle, sheep, and mares, and thus was the first person to raise livestock there. He had his Indians extract a large quantity of gold, and soon he was a wealthy man, investing 2,000 *castellanos* in partnership with the merchant, Andrés de Duero. He had Diego Velázquez's confidence and support to oversee the operation of many businesses and to tend to the construction of several buildings, including]. A *castellano*, also known as the *peso de oro*, was the Spanish monetary unit valued at 450 *maravedís*. In the Spanish currency, 34 maravedís equaled one *real*, and 275 maravedís equaled a piece of eight.

24. The duke of Alba's niece and wife of Admiral don Diego Colón.

25. It is noteworthy that C. adds "doña" to Catalina Suárez's name. It is apt, for she was the daughter of the hidalgo Diego Suárez Pacheco and doña María de Marcaide, who was from a noble family. See Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (Albuquerque, 2006), 136.

26. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 168–69, reports that Bermúdez married Velázquez's niece and was always a favorite.

Antonios Velázquez, and one Villegas—pressured Cortés to marry her. Because they disliked him, they spoke negatively [to] Diego Velázquez about certain important dealings **that Cortés conducted with respectable people, which he spoke of to his friends. Indeed, many complained [to Cortés] about Velázquez, [saying] that he did not award positions of importance to people of merit and that he gave *repartimientos*,** "grant of a group of natives to provide tribute and labor,"[27] **to those who did not deserve them. Finally, Velázquez had words with Cortés, and broke off his friendship and kinship ties with him. Ordering that Cortés be sent to jail, he began legal proceedings against him,**[28] as is customary in those lands. **Finding himself in jail,** Cortés broke the padlock's latch on the stocks, took the sheriff's sword and shield, opened and jumped through a window, and sought sanctuary in the church. Velázquez rebuked Cristóbal de Lagos, charging him with releasing Cortés in exchange for bribery. He attempted to remove Cortés from the sacristy by tricking him or by force, but Cortés resisted, for he understood every word. However, one day he lowered his guard and was captured by the *alguacil*, "town constable," Juan Escudero, and others as they walked in front of the church. They then surreptitiously placed him on a ship.

Cortés was supported by many who thought the governor had reacted out of anger. Once he found himself on board, he realized he was not free but would be sent to Santo Domingo or to Spain. He tried numerous times to pull his foot loose from the chain and struggled so hard that he succeeded, although with much pain. That night he exchanged clothes with his servant, escaped from the vault without anyone noticing him, quickly jumped from [LdeG: one side of] the ship to a skiff, **and with his servant leapt onto another ship's boat.**[29] The **sea** current **was so strong that he could not enter Baracoa.**[30] **Seeing that he was in trouble,** (f. 3v) **he took off his clothes, wrapped them with his documents and papers, tied them on his head, and swam toward shore, followed by his servant. He went to the house of a loyal friend. When Diego Velázquez learned about**

27. During the encounters/conquest phase, repartimiento tended to mean encomienda. In Chimalpahin's time, the meaning was "labor draft."

28. [LdeG: that he had entrusted to Cortés, saying that he had suspicious dealings with certain individuals in secret. Although it was not true, it appeared so, for many had gone to (Cortés's) house, complaining about Diego Velázquez, because he had not given them *repartimientos de indios*, "labor drafts of natives," or (because) what they had received did not amount to much. Since Cortés would not marry Catalina Suárez, Velázquez was angry and believed what they said. He abused Cortés verbally before many people, and even had him put in jail. Finding himself in stocks, Cortés feared a trial with false witnesses]

29. [LdeG: and escaped in it. In order not to be followed, he let a nearby ship's boat loose.]

30. Asunción de Baracoa near Santiago de Cuba, on the southern part of the island.

this, in order to win Cortés over, he[31] sent word to let bygones be bygones and become friends again so they could put down some islanders who had rebelled. Cortés married Catalina Suárez as promised, but also in order to live in peace. For many days he refused to speak with Velázquez **or renew their friendship. In the meantime,** Velázquez assembled a large contingent to fight the rebels.

Cortés told his brother-in-law Juan Suárez to hide a spear and a crossbow outside the town. At dusk, he left the church, recovered the crossbow, and went with his brother-in-law to a farm where Velázquez was alone with some servants. The rest of the troop was lodged nearby, with not all of them having reported yet, since it was the first day. Cortés arrived very late to find Velázquez studying the storeroom ledger. Cortés knocked at the open door, let himself in, introduced himself, and asked to speak with the lord governor. Seeing him armed at such a late hour, Velázquez was afraid. He invited him to supper and to rest untroubled at his house. Cortés responded that he had come only to hear what complaints he had of him and to prove that he was his friend. They shook hands as friends and after much discussion they slept in the same bed. The next day, Diego Orellana came to alert the governor that Cortés had fled. This is how Cortés rekindled his **old** friendship with Velázquez and joined him in war.

When Cortés returned, he thought he would drown since, on leaving Bocas de **Baracoa** [LdeG: Bany] to check on some shepherds and Indians he had brought from the mines to Baracoa where he lived, his canoe overturned that night in a storm, half a league from land. But he managed to swim to shore where he saw the light of some shepherds who were having their supper on the beach. These are some of the many dangers and adventures the best men must go through in order to achieve happiness **and fortune.**

Chapter 5. The Discovery of New Spain, **and Other Things**

As we related elsewhere, Francisco Hernández de Córdoba,[32] along with (f. 4) Cristóbal de Morante and Lope Ochoa de Caicedo, in three ships

31. [LdeG: of the Río Macaguanigua in Baracoa was so strong that he could not enter in the skiff, since he was tired and rowing alone, nor could he land for fear of capsizing and drowning. He took his clothes off and tied to his head certain documents not in favor of Velázquez, which he had as *escribano de cabildo*, "cabildo notary," and officer of the treasurer. He jumped into the sea and swam to shore. He went to his house, spoke with Juan Suárez, and, armed, sought sanctuary in a church. Diego Velásquez]

32. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 346, notes that Francisco Hernández de Córdoba (not to be confused with Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, mentioned earlier) explored the coast of

discovered Yucatan in 1517 while searching for Indians [for slaving] or [with whom] to barter.[33] Although he gained nothing but wounds from the discovery, he brought news of the land's wealth in gold and silver as well as of people wearing clothes. The following year, the governor of Cuba, Velázquez, sent his nephew Juan de Grijalva[34] with two hundred Spaniards in four ships in the hope of obtaining much gold and silver in exchange for merchandise in the land that Francisco Hernández **discovered** [LdeG: talked about]. Juan de Grijalva arrived at Yucatan and fought with **the Indians and the lord of Potonchan**[35] [LdeG: the people of Champoton].

Wounded in battle, he crossed the river which, for this reason, was named Grijalva, and bartered for many items of great value, much gold, cotton ***mantas***, "lengths of cloth," [LdeG: clothing], and beautiful items made with feathers. He **named the land** [LdeG: stopped at] San Juan de Ulúa and took possession for the king in Diego Velázquez's name. He exchanged his merchandise for pieces of gold, cotton [LdeG: mantas], and plumage. And had he known his good luck, he would have settled these rich lands, as his companions begged him [to do], and he would have been like Cortés. But not knowing the potential, Cortés's destiny was not to be his. His excuse was that he did not mean to settle but to claim the lands and find out if they were part of Yucatan or an island. He also returned for fear of encountering a vast land with too many people, because he realized that [Yucatan] was not an island, for the [Spaniards] avoided inland expeditions at that time. There were also many who wished to return to Cuba, such as Pedro de Alvarado,[36] who was mad about an island girl. He headed back with the news of his

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Yucatan and beyond and brought news that prompted Velázquez to launch his own great discovery expedition. Córdoba refused to carry out slaving for Velázquez; he died in Cuba in 1522, asking forgiveness for what he had done in Yucatan.

33. See Thomas, *Conquest*, 80. It is more likely that Juan Ponce de León and his pilot, Antonio de Alaminos, were the first to investigate Yucatan.

34. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 195–96, notes that Grijalva greatly displeased his uncle when he returned with little gold and scant information about the mainland. He later sailed with Pánfilo de Narváez and Garay. In 1527 he was killed in Nicaragua.

35. Peter Gerhard, *The Southeast Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton, 1979), 35–36, states that Potonchan was a large, powerful state of Chontal-speakers located in what became colonial Tabasco, situated along the southern Gulf Coast. San Juan de Ulúa and Villa Rica were Cortés's two first settlements along that coast, but neither had been established yet.

36. Thomas, *Conquest*, 112–13, 123, notes that Alvarado would become Cortés's closest confidante and usually most trusted captain. He was with Cortés through most of the combat and then eventually went on to conquer Guatemala, becoming governor there. He died in 1541 from injuries sustained when his horse fell on him during a campaign against native peoples in northern New Spain.

findings, therefore, to Velázquez. Grijalva went up the coast to Pánuco[37] and turned toward Cuba, bartering with the natives as he went for gold, feathers, and cotton in spite of everyone else crying because [the Spaniards] did not want to return with him, since he was so unworthy. Grijalva took five months to return to Cuba, and eight months had elapsed since he left Santiago and returned to that city. On his return, Velázquez rightly refused to see him.

Chapter 6. Juan de Grijalva's Barter **from the Islands of Yucatan and San Juan de Ulúa**

Juan de Grijalva bartered so many items so cheaply from the Indians of Potonchan, San Juan de Ulúa, Villa Rica, and other coastal sites that the members of his company would have loved to remain there, happy to trade all they had at such a low price. The workmanship of the goods was worth more than the material. The items were as follows:

(f. 4v) A small hollow gold idol; a similar small idol, with horns and hair, a necklace, a fan in its hand, and a precious stone for a navel.

One piece of thin gold like a paten [or medallion], set with some precious stones; one gold casque with two horns and black hair.

Twenty-two gold earrings, with three gold pendants each.

The same number of gold earrings, but smaller.

Four wide bands of gold.

One cuisse of **thin** gold.

One strand of hollow gold beads, with a frog of the same [metal], **very** well made.

Another strand of the same with a small gold lion.

One pair of large gold pendants.

Two small gold eagles, **very** well cast.

One gold salt cellar **weighing six ounces**.

Two gold and turquoise pendants, each with eight pendants.

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37. Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain* (Cambridge, 1972), 211–12, reports that Pánuco was on the northern edge of the modern state of Veracruz. It was a major polity whose peoples, the Huaxteca, held out against the Spaniards for some time. It seems to have represented the northeastern extent of the area that Cortés intended to settle.

One woman's choker made of twelve pieces, with twenty-four **precious** stone pendants.

A large gold necklace; **another two necklaces of thin gold** [LdeG: six thin necklaces of gold].

Another seven gold necklaces, with **valuable** stones.

Four pendants of good gold leaf.

Twenty gold fish hooks of **fine** gold that they fished with.

Twelve gold nuggets, weighing 50 [gold] *ducados*, "ducats."[38]

One gold braid, and thin gold plates.

One gold pot and one hollow idol of thin gold.

Several [LdeG: thin gold] brooches.

Nine strands of hollow gold with a bead.

Two strings of **valuable** gilded beads.

Another strand of gilded wooden beads, with gold pins.

One small gold cup with eight purple stones and twenty-three of other colors.

A double-sided mirror framed in gold.

(f. 5) Four gold bells, and one small gold salt cellar.

One small gold vessel with several small necklaces of little value.

Some gold earrings of no value.

Something like a hollow gold apple.

Forty axes of gold with an amalgam of copper worth up to 2,500 ducats.

All required pieces for a man's armor, in thin gold.

One suit of wooden armor, covered with gold leaf, small black stones, and a leather headpiece with gold.

Four wooden cuisses with **vellum**-thin gold coverings.

Two wooden containers with **thin** gold leaf.

Two shields covered with many **fine** feathers of different colors.

Other shields of feathers and gold.

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38. LdeG apparently uses "ducat" as a unit of measure as well as currency. A ducat was worth 375 maravedís.

One large feather piece in many colors, with a lifelike **eagle** [LdeG: little bird] in the center, and one fan of gold and feathers.

Two **superb green** feather fans **that resembled canopies**.

Two small alabaster urns full of precious stones **for necklaces**, somewhat fine, among them one worth 2,000 ducats, and several strands of tin, five strands of round clay beads covered with very thin gold leaf.

One hundred and **fifty** [Lde G: thirty] hollow gold beads.

[LdeG: Many more strings of wood and gilded clay beads. Many more golden beads.]

One pair of gilded wooden scissors, two gold masks, and one mask inlaid with gold.

Four gilded wooden masks, one with two straight bands inlaid with small turquoise stones, another with ears of the same, although with more gold; another was inlaid above the nose and the other above the eyes.

Four wooden plates covered with gold leaf, **or large gourds resembling bowls**.

One dog's head covered with small stones.

Another animal head, gilded with a crown and crest and two pendants of thinner gold.

Five pairs of shoes like woven rope sandals and three red horns.

Seven flint knives they used for sacrifices.

Two painted wooden bowls, one pitcher.

One jacket with feather half-sleeves, well-fashioned.

(f. 5v) One garment of fine cotton, like a robe, and another cape of fine **green** feathers, large and delicate.

Many narrow lengths of **fine** cotton cloth.

Other **rather** coarse lengths of cotton cloth.

Many incense sticks of mild fragrance, two headdresses or veils[39] of **good** cotton.

Much *aji*, **called *chili***,[40] **or local pimentos** and other fruits.

Besides this, he brought back a woman given to him and some male **Indians**, one for whom they offered him his weight in gold, which Grijalva refused.

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39. LdeG uses the Spanish term *almaizares,* "Moorish headdresses."
40. C. adds the Nahuatl term *chilli* to LdeG's *aji* (chili or chile pepper).

He also brought back news of Amazons living on certain islands, and many believed it. They were astounded at what he had bartered at such puny prices, as all had not been worth more than six shirts of coarse cloth [and the following Spanish goods]:

Five head scarves.

Three pairs of breeches, five women's slippers, five multicolored wrought leather belts, with leather pouches and bags.

Many small purses made of soft leather, many leather straps with one or two fastenings, six small gilded mirrors, four glass medallions.

Two thousand strands of green glass, which they prize highly.

One hundred strands of many colored beads.

Twenty combs, highly valued.

Six scissors, which were pleasing to them.

Fifteen knives, large and small.

One thousand sewing needles and two thousand pins.

Eight sandals.

A pair of tongs and a hammer.

Seven colored capes.

Three coats with colored stripes.

A coarse coat with its hood.

One green velvet dress, worn, with a black velvet cap.

(f. 6) [Chapter 7]. **The Conquest of Mexico, and** Cortés's Preparations to Arm the Fleet

Concerned that Juan de Grijalva had taken longer to return or send notice than Francisco Hernández before him, Diego Velázquez sent Cristóbal de Olid[41] in a caravel with orders to return with letters from Grijalva. But Olid did not stay long in Yucatan, and not finding Grijalva, he returned to Cuba, much to Grijalva's and Velázquez's disadvantage. If Olid had gone to San Juan de Ulúa or farther, he would have ordered Grijalva to settle there; but he said he was forced to turn back because

41. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 101, states that Bernal Díaz del Castillo described Olid as "a Hector" when it came to combat. He was on-again, off-again in his alliance with Cortés and ultimately rebelled against him in Honduras, where he was captured and then disemboweled.

he had lost his anchors. Pedro de Alvarado arrived after Cristóbal de Olid's departure with news of [Grijalva's] discovery and with many items of gold, feathers, and cotton he had traded. Velázquez was pleased and amazed with the items and with what Alvarado told him, as were all the Spaniards in Cuba. However, he feared Grijalva's return because the sick who had come back [early with Alvarado] told him that Grijalva did not want to settle because] the land was too vast and the people too many and bellicose, but also because he himself doubted his relative's prudence and courage.

Velázquez decided to send some ships with soldiers, arms, and trinkets, thinking to enrich himself through bartering and to settle by force. He begged Baltasar Bermúdez to undertake the enterprise, yet since he asked 3,000 ducats for arms and provisions, Bermúdez refused, saying the expense would be more than the profit. A greedy man, Velázquez had little stomach for spending money. He wanted to send a fleet at someone else's expense as he had done with Grijalva, since Francisco de Montejo[42] had outfitted a ship and Alonso Hernández de Portocarrero,[43] Alonso de Ávila,[44] Diego de Ordaz,[45] and many others joined Grijalva at their own expense. Velázquez suggested to Hernando Cortés that they share equally the cost of outfitting, since Cortés had 2,000 castellanos in gold invested with Andrés de Duero,[46] a merchant, and because [Cortés] was a diligent, discreet, and valiant man. He begged Cortés to accompany the fleet, promoting the trip and the enterprise. Owing to his great desire and valor and thinking it would not be too expensive, Cortés

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42. Ibid., 91–92, reports that Montejo was from a good family in Salamanca and did well in the Caribbean. He was initially close to Velázquez but later became one of Cortés's most reliable allies. He delivered the first royal *quinto*, "fifth," along with Cortés's letter to the king in 1519. After the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan, he received three encomiendas. Montejo later led the conquest of Yucatan.

43. Ibid., 68–70, adds that Portocarrero was another strong supporter of Cortés and that he traveled to Seville with Montejo on that first return trip. While at Tabasco, he was given one of the twenty women offered by the local ruler. That woman was Malintzin, who was then taken by Cortés, once he recognized her linguistic abilities.

44. Ibid., 18–19, describes Ávila as frank, bold, quarrelsome, and arrogant, among other things, and adds that Cortés could not tolerate him. Nevertheless, after the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan, his charge in 1522 was to deliver all the treasure to the king; but on the way he was taken prisoner by the French and lost everything.

45. Ibid., 102–5, reports that Ordaz originally worked with Velázquez, but later joined forces with Cortés and became a major player in combat and settlement. After the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan, he traveled widely, as far as the mouth of the Río Orinoco in South America. He also wrote many letters, some of which are extant.

46. Ibid., 182, notes that Duero was an old friend of Cortés's. Yet it is alleged that later Cortés offered a generous reward for anyone at Narváez's camp (at Villa Rica) who killed him.

accepted the partnership and the cost of the trip. Once they agreed on everything, they sent Juan de Saucedo[47] (who had come with Alvarado) to the Hieronymite friars, who were governing then, to apply for a license to barter in order to recover expenses and to search for Grijalva. No one was allowed to barter, the equivalent of exchanging cloth for gold and silver, without a license. The governors, fray Luis de Figueroa, fray Alonso de Santo Domingo, and fray Bernardino de [Manzanedo], (f. 6v) granted a license to Cortés as captain and outfitter with Diego Velázquez. They ordered that a treasurer and an inspector accompany them to collect and store the king's fifth, as was the custom.

While Cortés waited for the license from the governors, he began to ready himself for the journey and asked his friends and many others if they wished to accompany him. Three hundred responded, and he bought a caravel and a brigantine to accompany the caravel brought by Pedro de Alvarado and another brigantine of Velázquez's and fitted them out with arms, artillery, and munitions. He bought wine, oil, beans, chickpeas, and other foodstuffs. From the tentmaker Diego Sánchez he bought a tent for 700 pieces of gold on credit [from which] to sell small trinkets. Velázquez gave him 1,000 castellanos belonging to Pánfilo de Narváez,[48] which he was holding in his absence, saying he himself had not one cent, and to the many soldiers that joined the fleet he gave monies in escrow, or loans. On October 3, 1518, both men wrote down what each agreed to do in the presence of Alonso de Escalante, royal and public escribano. About that same time, when Juan de Grijalva returned to Cuba, Velázquez changed his plans. He refused to spend any more on Cortés's fleet and did not want him to finish outfitting it. His reason was that he wanted to send only Grijalva's ships. He observed how much Cortés had spent and how enthusiastically he provisioned the fleet. He believed that Cortés would rebel against him as he himself had rebelled against Admiral don Diego [Colón]. He listened to and put faith in Bermúdez and the Velázquezes, who told him not to trust a deceitful and proud Extremaduran obsessed with his honor and a man who would avenge what had happened in the past. Bermúdez was very sorry he had not accepted the enterprise when it was offered, having found out the large and hefty amount of barter obtained by Grijalva and the wealth of

47. Salcedo in Thomas, *Conquest*, 97.

48. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 216–17, adds that Narváez was Velázquez's deputy in Cuba and served him well in subduing the island. He was rewarded with lucrative encomiendas and later went to Spain as Velázquez's advocate. Upon his return, Velázquez sent him with nineteen ships to New Spain to capture Cortés. Cortés, however, took him by surprise, put out his eye, and imprisoned him for several years. On his release, he led an expedition to conquer Florida but instead died there ignominiously with nearly all his men.

the recently discovered land. **(**As his relatives**)**, the Velázquezes craved to be named captains and heads of the fleet, although, as they say, they were not up to the task.

Diego Velázquez thought that if he pretended to back out, Cortés would as well, but when he continued to fit out the fleet, Velázquez sent Amador de Larez **(**an important person**)** to try to convince [Cortés] to abandon the journey, as Grijalva had returned, and they would make up what he had already spent. Aware of Velázquez's intentions, Cortés told Larez that if only not to disgrace himself, he would continue to make the journey and not abandon his company. If Velázquez wished to send someone else on his own account, he could go ahead and do so, since Cortés had already received license from the **friars**-governors. He spoke with his friends and important people who were readying for the journey to see if they would prefer to follow and support him. And as he confirmed (f. 7) their friendship and support, he sought funding and borrowed 4,000 pieces of gold from merchants Andrés de Duero, Pedro de Jerez, Antonio de Santa Clara, and others. With these funds he bought two ships, six horses, and many suits of clothing. He aided many, set up house, feasted, and began going about armed and with a large entourage, so much so that people murmured he was acting like a lord with no title.

When Grijalva arrived at Santiago, Velázquez refused to see him for having left that rich land. It bothered him that Cortés could leave to go there with so much power; but he could not stop him, since everyone there, including those who had arrived with Grijalva, followed [Cortés]. If he had tried to retain Cortés by force, this would have sparked a rebellion in the city and even led to deaths. As he could not prevail, he dissembled. According to what several [men] said, he ordered that Cortés not be given any provisions. Cortés arranged to depart soon, announcing that he was leaving by himself; since Grijalva had returned, he told [his men] not to have anything to do with Velázquez. He ordered the soldiers[49] to go on board with as much food as possible. He took the pigs and sheep that Hernando Alfonso had destined for the slaughterhouse, paying him with a gold chain in a thistle design to make up for leaving the city without any meat. And he left Santiago de Baracoa on November 18, **1518**, with more than three hundred Spaniards aboard six ships.

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49. Although LdeG and C. use the term "soldier" throughout the account, it should be understood that by no means could an individual's participation in an expedition be thought of as any sort of formal military operation. At best, "company," with Cortés as leader or captain, describes the enterprise.

[Chapter 8]. The Men and Ships that Cortés Took for the Conquest

Cortés left Santiago with few provisions for the large contingent he brought with him and for the uncertainties of the voyage. He soon sent Pedro Suárez Gallinato de Porras, of Seville, in a caravel to seek provisions in Jamaica and take them to Cabo de Corrientes or Punta de San Antón, the far tip of the western part of the island, and he went with the others to Macaca. There, he bought three hundred loads of bread and some pigs from Tamayo, the king's treasurer. In Trinidad, Cortés bought a ship from Alonso Guillén, and from others, three horses and five hundred loads of grain. While there, he learned that Juan Núñez de Cedeño was on his way, his ship loaded with provisions to sell to the mines. Cortés sent Diego de Ordaz in a well-armed caravel to take him **willingly or by force** to Punta de San Antón. Ordaz captured him in the Canal de Jardines and brought him to where he was told. Cedeño and the rest came to Trinidad with manifests of their cargo, which amounted to four thousand *arrobas*[50] of bread, one thousand and five hundred sides of salt pork, and many hens. In payment, Cortés gave them some gold pieces, ropes, and a bill of lading, which caused Cedeño to join the expedition. In Trinidad, Cortés picked up almost two hundred of Grijalva's men who lived there and in Matanzas, Carenas, and other places. He sent the ships on ahead and went with the men by land to La Habana,[51] which was then founded on the south bank at the mouth of the Río Onicaxinal.

(Out of loyalty to Diego Velázquez**)**, the townspeople refused to sell Cortés any food; however, the bishop's tithe collector, Cristóbal de Quesada, as well as a vendor of papal bulls, sold him (f. 7v) two thousand sides of salt pork and as many loads of maize and chiles. With this, Cortés comfortably supplied his fleet and divided up his men and supplies among the ships. At that time, a caravel arrived with Pedro de Alvarado, Cristóbal de Olid, Alonso de Ávila, Francisco de Montejo, and many others from Grijalva's company who had gone to speak with Velázquez. One of them, Garnica, brought letters from Velázquez for Cortés begging him to wait until he, Velázquez, arrived or sent a message relating to a number of things that benefited them both. Additional letters were for Diego de Ordaz and others asking them to take Cortés prisoner. Ordaz invited Cortés to a banquet on board the caravel under his command, plotting to bring him to Santiago. But Cortés was wise to the plot; he pretended he had a stomachache and did not attend. To avert a mutiny, he retired to

50. A Spanish unit of weight equal to 11.502 kilograms, or 25.35 pounds.
51. Havana (and hereinafter).

his ship and gave orders to weigh anchor and for everyone to follow him to San Antón, where they all soon arrived in good order.

At Guaniguanico, Cortés reviewed the troops, counting five hundred and fifty Spaniards, fifty of whom were sailors. He divided them into eleven companies headed by Captains Alonso de Ávila, Alonso Hernández de Portocarrero, Diego de Ordaz, Francisco de Montejo, Francisco de Morla,[52] Francisco de Salceda,[53] Juan de Escalante,[54] Juan Velázquez de León,[55] Cristóbal de Olid, and one Escobar. As general, Cortés also assumed command of a company, and, since there were eleven more ships, he named as many captains, each in charge of a company and a ship. He also named as first pilot Antonio de Alaminos,[56] who had sailed with Francisco Hernández de Córdoba and Juan de Grijalva. There were also two hundred islanders from Cuba as porters and servants, some blacks, some Indian women, and sixteen horses and mares. He then supplied them with five thousand sides of salt pork and six thousand *cargas*[57] of maize, yucca, and chiles, each load weighing two arrobas, the weight an Indian can sustain on foot. This included many hens, sugar, wine, olive oil, chickpeas, and other vegetables. Added to all this were large quantities of trinkets; for example, small bells, mirrors, glass bead necklaces and strings, needles, pins, bags, hooks, clasps, ribbons, buckles, knives, scissors, tongs, hammers, iron axes, shirts, dressing gowns, head scarves, ruffles, breeches, linen handkerchiefs, capes, pants, and wool hoods.

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52. Ibid., 95, notes that although Morla was reportedly allied with Velázquez, he became Cortés's good friend. He led the charge at Tzintla, and some of his fellow soldiers thought that he was Santiago Matamoros himself, Spain's patron saint.

53. Ibid., 145–46, states that Salceda delivered the news in Veracruz that Velázquez had indeed been appointed adelantado. He also brought much-needed men and horses for Cortés's company. He later died during the Noche Triste.

54. Juan Gutiérrez de Escalante in ibid., 65. He was a good friend of Cortés's and was stationed at Veracruz, where he helped strip the ships of their gear before they were scuttled. He was later killed with others (by Qualpopoca), which gave Cortés the opportunity to imprison Moteuczoma.

55. Ibid., 139, describes Velázquez de León as Diego Velázquez's relative and a brother-in-law of Pánfilo de Narváez who nonetheless formed a close relationship with Cortés early in the enterprise and later served as one of his most valuable captains. He was put in charge of the king's fifth during the Noche Triste and was never heard from again.

56. Ibid., 3–4, adds that Alaminos had arrived in America as a cabin boy on Cristóbal Colón's last voyage. He later traveled with Ponce de León in search of the elusive fountain of youth and then served as pilot for Hernández de Córdoba on one of his voyages of exploration. He also served Cortés well as pilot on several occasions.

57. A carga is equal to 2 *fanegas* (about 1.5 bushels per fanega). LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 411, describes it as the load carried by a *tameme*, "porter"; two arrobas, or 50 pounds. Tameme is a corrupted, Hispanized, and pluralized form of the Nahuatl term *tlamama*.

Everything was divided among the ships: the flagship weighed one hundred tons; three others, either eighty or **sixty** [LdeG: seventy] tons; the rest were small open vessels and brigantines. The flag that Cortés hoisted on this journey was of white and blue stripes with a red cross in the center surrounded by a Latin maxim that translated into Spanish as "Friends, let us follow the Cross, and if we have Faith (f. 8) we will conquer with this Sign."[58] This was the outfit that Cortés prepared for the journey. He won so great a kingdom with so small an investment. The fleet he sailed to foreign and unfamiliar lands was no bigger or better, yet even with such a small company, he vanquished innumerable Indians. Never did a captain with such a small army accomplish so many feats, achieve so many victories, or conquer so vast an empire. He brought no money with him to pay the men; instead, he incurred many debts, as Spaniards do not go to war and the conquest of the Indies for the pay. If they did, they would not go so far. They go to the Indies to seek an estate or huge riches. With the fleet prepared and outfitted **(**as you have heard**)**, Cortés briefly rallied his troops as follows.

[Chapter 9]. Cortés Speaks to His Troops **with Great Discretion as a Good Captain**

(My Friends and Comrades**)**,

It is true that every good and courageous man desires and strives to equal with his own acts those of the best men of his time and even of past times. Thus, I embark on a grand and beautiful enterprise that will become most famous, as I know in my heart we will conquer great and rich lands, many peoples never before seen, and greater kingdoms than those of our kings. The desire for glory extends beyond mortal life; it is little satisfied by conquering the entire world, much less one or a few **kings** [LdeG: kingdoms]. I have gathered ships, arms, horses, and the rest of what is needed to prepare for this war and bring besides vast provisions. I have invested my fortune in all that is necessary and advantageous for conquest. I have spent much of my and my friends' fortunes, but it seems to me that the smaller these become, the more I have gained in honor. Small things should be put aside when greater ones are offered, which I hope in God will come to the greater glory of our king and our nation from our fleet rather than those of others.

58. Cortés reportedly appropriated this saying from Constantine's (r. 306–337) famous legend on the banner that he carried into battle. For the original Latin, see Henry R. Wagner, *The Rise of Fernando Cortés* (Los Angeles, 1944), vi, 39.

I shall not mention how pleasing it will be to God our Lord, for whose love I have willingly dedicated my labors and fortune. I put aside the dangers to life and honor that I have suffered in assembling this fleet so you will not think that I expect more gain from it than honor, for good men desire honor more than riches. We are beginning a good and just war,[59] one that will bring us great fame. Almighty God, in whose name and faith it is waged, will ensure our victory, and time will bring the closure that comes to all actions guided by reason [LdeG: and counsel]. We must therefore employ another manner, another discourse, another strategy than that of Córdoba and Grijalva, which I do not wish to dispute for lack of time that urges us along.

But we will do what we see fit there, and here I offer you great prizes, although cloaked in great hardship. But virtue disdains indolence, so if you wish, mistake hope for virtue or virtue for hope, and if you will not leave me, as I shall not leave you or this opportunity, I will make you in a very short time the richest men ever to venture here or ever to join forces in this war. You are few **(**I know**)** but of such valor that neither the Indians' struggle nor their strength will rebuff you. We know by experience that in these lands, God has, as always, favored (f. 8v) the Spanish nation, which never lacked, nor will lack, virtue and endeavor; so go joyful and content, and make the outcome equal to the beginning.

[Chapter 10]. Cortés's Entry into Acuzamil[60]

With this reasoning, Cortés awakened in his comrades a great hope for things to come and great admiration for him. And they were so eager to accompany him to those rarely seen lands that it did not seem they were going to war but to certain victory and gain. Cortés was very pleased to see them so happy and eager to go with him on that journey. As soon as he boarded his flagship, he ordered them to embark immediately. And seeing that he had time, he did not set sail until he had heard mass and prayed to God for guidance that morning, the eighteenth day of February, year of our Lord, Redemptor of the world, fifteen hundred and nineteen. Once at sea, as is the custom, he gave all the captains and pilots the

59. For discussion about the issue of "just war," see Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America* (Boston, 1965); for a comparative study, see Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), and also Rolena Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative* (New Haven, 2007).

60. Cozumel (and hereinafter). Thomas, *Conquest*, 101, states that Cozumel was an island located fifteen miles from the coast of Yucatan.

name of San Pedro Apóstol to seek the favor of his patron saint. He told them to always keep an eye on his ship, as it carried a large lantern as beacon and guide for the route they should take. The route was almost east to west of Punta de San Antón, on the far side of Cuba toward Cabo de Catoche, the first point of Yucatan where they should go directly and afterward follow the coastline northwest.

The first night that Cortés attempted to cross the gulf between Cuba and Yucatan, a distance of slightly more than sixty leagues, a northeast wind began to blow with a heavy downpour. The storm broke up the fleet and scattered the ships, and each took off as best it could. The pilots followed instructions on which direction they should go, and, except for one, all sailed at different times to the island of Cozumel. The flagship took the longest, while another commanded by Captain Francisco de Morla was left behind. Due either to the helmsman's negligence or his carelessness, or to the violence of the wind and the water, it lost its rudder, and the captain lit the lantern to signal distress. On seeing it, Cortés brought the flagship over, and realizing the need and the danger the ship was in, he waited for daylight and the storm to break in order to rescue the men and repair the ship. At daybreak, God willed the sea to be calm and less angry than at night, and during the day they looked for the rudder, which was lost somewhere between the two ships. Captain Morla dove into the sea tied to a rope and swam to the rudder. They lifted and reattached the part, then set sail. They sailed for two days without reaching land or seeing any sails from the fleet. The next day they reached Punta de las Mujeres[61] where they found some of the ships. Ordering them to follow him, Cortés pointed the flagship's prow toward where he thought the wind and the weather might have driven the other missing ships. (f. 9) Upon arriving at Cozumel, he located all the ships except one, which could not be found for days. The people of the island, frightened, had packed their belongings and hidden in the woods. Cortés ordered his men to go inland to a town near the coast where a number of the Spaniards had already dropped anchor. They went to the town, with good buildings made of bricks, but found no one there. However, inside the houses they found cotton clothing and some **expensive** gold jewelry. They climbed a high stone tower by the sea, thinking they would find men and goods inside, but all it contained were clay and stone idols.

When they returned, they told Cortés that they had seen many maize fields and prairies, large beehives, groves, and orchards, and they gave him the cotton and gold items they had found. Cortés was elated with

61. Now known as Isla Mujeres (and hereinafter).

the news, although he was surprised that the inhabitants had fled the town, since they had not done so when Juan de Grijalva was there. He suspected the larger fleet had frightened the people, and also hoped it was not a trick to lure him into battle. He unloaded the horses so he could inspect the island and fight if necessary, and so they could graze and refresh themselves, as there were grasslands where his men disembarked. When he sent them to search the island, some men found four or five women with three children in the deep woods and brought them to Cortés. He could not understand them, nor they him, but through their gestures and other means they [the Spaniards] understood that one, the children's mother, was of high rank, and the other women were her servants. Cortés treated her kindly when she wept over her and her children's captivity. He dressed her as best he could in the Spanish style, giving mirrors and scissors to her servants and to each child a pretty jewel pin to please them. He continued to treat her with respect as he wished to send one of the women for her lord and husband in order to speak with him, and so he could see how well his wife and children were treated.

The lord Calach Uni[62] sent some islanders to see what was going on and to inquire about his wife. Cortés gave them barter items for themselves and the Calach Uni. Cortés sent them back, inviting the Calach Uni on his and the woman's behalf to come back and meet those from whom he fled for no reason, since Cortés promised that no person or household would be harmed or molested by his comrades. The Calach Uni understood, and for the love of his wife and children he came the next day with all the men from the town, where there were already many Spaniards. However, he did not allow them to leave their homes, ordering them instead to receive the visitors and provide them well from then on with much fish, bread, honey, and fruit. The Calach Uni addressed Cortés with great ceremony and humility and was very well received and treated lovingly. Cortés not only demonstrated the Spaniards' good will by means of signs and words but through gifts, (f. 9v) offering him and his men many barter items that to us are of very little value but that they esteem highly, more than the gold sought by all.

Cortés ordered besides that all the gold and garments taken from the town be brought before him so that each islander could identify what was his. Cortés returned the items, leaving them not a little happy and in awe. Enriched with the Spanish trinkets, the Indians were very festive and went all around the island showing them to everyone. They com-

62. LdeG has "el Calach Uni," while C. has "El señor Calach Uni," reflecting his traditional use of titles whenever appropriate. "Calach Uni" is possibly a corrupt form or Hispanicization of the Yucatecan Maya *Halach Uinic*, a title of a territorial ruler in the precontact era. We thank Victoria Bricker for her assistance in translating this term, 23 June 2007.

manded them by order of the **Lord** Calach Uni to return in safety and without fear to their homes with their children and wives because the strangers were good and kind. With **this new** [LdeG: these news and] command, all returned to their homes and towns, as others had similarly left, and little by little, losing their fear of the Spaniards, they remained secure and friendly. They provided our army with honey and bees' wax, bread, fish, and fruit for as long as it remained on the island.

[Chapter 11]. News from the People of Cozumel About **the Spanish Interpreter** Gerónimo de Aguilar[63]

When Cortés saw that the Indians had accepted his arrival and were docile and good natured, he decided to remove their idols and give them the Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord and the image of our Glorious Mother, the Holy Virgin Mary. He spoke to them one day through his interpreter, a man named Melchor who had been brought by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba. However, being a fisherman, he was uncouth and a simpleton, apparently unable to speak or answer. Even so, he told them that Cortés wanted to give them a better law and a better god than theirs. They answered that they welcomed the offer, and thus he called them to the temple to hear mass, breaking the idols and replacing them with crosses and images of our Lady, which they adored with devotion. While Cortés was there, they did not sacrifice as before.

The islanders never tired of seeing our horses and ships. They never stopped coming and going, and so much did they marvel at the beards and color of the men that they came up to touch them. They made hand gestures toward Yucatan to indicate that several suns [days] away were five or six bearded men, **as they called the Spaniards**. Considering it important to have a good translator to understand and be understood, Cortés asked the ***cacique***,[64] "head man" or "chief," the Calach Uni, for **an Indian** to take a letter to the bearded men, who, he was told, lived **there**. But no one was willing to take the message for fear of the great and cruel leader there, who, on learning of the mission, would have the messenger

63. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 1–3, notes that Aguilar went to the Indies with don Diego Colón and later was shipwrecked in the Caribbean Sea. He was taken prisoner and worked for years as a servant of a local ruler in Yucatan. Once rescued, he proved invaluable as an interpreter for Cortés, first among Maya-language–speaking peoples of the Yucatan peninsula and later as cointerpreter with Malintzin, at least until she became proficient in Spanish. He was rewarded with encomiendas after the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan and even served as a canon at the cathedral.

64. An Arawak term that the Spaniards adopted and used to identify most indigenous leaders across New Spain.

killed and eaten. Seeing this, Cortés appealed to three very compliant islanders in his camp and, giving them some trinkets, asked them to deliver the letter. The Indians begged off, as they were sure they would be killed. But at last, after many pleadings and gifts, the messengers agreed to go, so Cortés immediately wrote (f. 10) a letter summarized as follows:

Nobles and Lords,

I left Cuba with a fleet of eleven ships and five hundred and fifty Spaniards and arrived here in Cozumel from where I write you this letter. The islanders have assured me that there are five or six bearded men **there** [LdeG: in this land] very much like us. They cannot give me any more details or other signs, but I am certain by the ones I do have that you are Spaniards. I and the hidalgos who have come with me to discover and settle these lands ask that no later than six days after you receive this you come to us without any delay or excuse. If you come, we will all acknowledge and celebrate the good deeds you will bestow on our fleet. I am sending a brigantine to bring you and two ships as escorts.

Hernando Cortés

The Indians devised yet another reason not to take the letter, saying they did not know how to smuggle it without being seen and blamed by spies, whom they feared. Cortés then decided to wrap it securely in the hair of one of the messengers, and he chose the one who seemed smartest among them. He tied the letter carefully to his hair, which is customarily worn long for wars and celebrations, braided across the forehead. The ship that carried the Indians was a brigantine captained by Juan de Escalante; the rest were captained by Diego de Ordaz who took fifty men with him for protection. Escalante dropped off the Indians at the spot where he was told. He waited for eight days, although he had been told to wait only six. And since the Indians delayed, they worried that they might have been killed or captured.

The ships returned to Cozumel without the Indians, which saddened the Spaniards, especially Cortés, who now thought that the bearded men did not exist and that they would need a translator. In the meantime, the ships' damages from the storm were repaired; they were made ready to sail, which they did when the brigantine and two ships returned.

[Chapter 12]. Gerónimo de Aguilar Comes to Hernando Cortés

As the Christians had treated them as friends, the islanders, and especially the Calach Uni, the **cacique**, regretted their departure. The fleet left Cozumel under clear skies for the Yucatan coast and Isla Mujeres. Cortés

disembarked there to see the lay of the land and the inhabitants' customs, but he was not pleased. On the following day, Ash Wednesday, they heard mass on land, spoke with the Indians who came to see them, and, back on board, attempted to round the point for Catoche to see what kind of a place it was. Before they rounded the point, Pedro de Alvarado's ship sent out a distress signal, and all ships set off to see what had occurred. As Cortés calculated, the ship had sprung a leak that not even two pumps could remedy; it could only be fixed by putting in to port. He returned to Cozumel with the entire fleet. The islanders ran to meet them happily, wondering what they wanted (f. 10v) or had forgotten. Our men explained the problem, as they disembarked and repaired the ship.

The following Saturday all boarded ship except for Cortés and another fifty men. The weather took a turn for the worse, with gusty and contrary winds, so they did not sail. The storm lasted through the night, but the next day the sun came out and the sea calmed sufficiently so they could depart. Since it was the first Sunday of Lent, they decided to first hear mass and eat breakfast. While Cortés ate, he was told that a canoe with a sail was crossing straight from Yucatan to the island, where the ships were anchored. Cortés sent [some men] to observe where it was going. Since it was leaning toward the fleet, he told Andrés de Tapia[65] to hide with some comrades at the water's edge to see if any men disembarked and, if so, to bring them to him.

The canoe landed behind a point or cape and out came four naked men, with only their genitals covered, their hair braided and wound around their forehead like women, and carrying many bows and arrows **and quivers**. When they saw the Spaniards so near, running toward them and brandishing their swords to capture them, three became frightened and wanted to return to the canoe. But one came forward and, speaking in a language the Spaniards could not understand, told them not to flee or fear. He then said in Spanish, "My lords, are you Christians?" They answered yes and that they were Spaniards. On hearing this, he cried in happiness and asked, "Is it Wednesday?" as he had a Book of Hours with which he prayed every day. He beseeched them to give thanks to God, and kneeling on the ground he lifted his hands and eyes to Heaven. With many tears, he prayed and gave infinite thanks to God for mercifully rescuing him from infidels and infernal men and placing him in the company of Christians and men of his nation.

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65. Ibid., 124–30, states that Tapia served as groom to don Diego Colón and went to Cuba at his patron's recommendation. He later joined Cortés and became one of his most trusted captains, accompanying him in almost all his exploits. He was rewarded with several encomiendas, but like most of the conquerors, he reportedly died poor. He wrote his own *relación*, "chronicle," of events that occurred during the expedition.

Andrés de Tapia went to help lift him, and he embraced him, as did the other Spaniards. He told the three Indians to follow him as he talked to the Spaniards, asking about things until they reached Cortés, who received him kindly and took care to dress and give him what he needed. Content to welcome him, Cortés inquired as to his ill fortunes, asking his name. He answered happily in front of all:

My Lord,

My name is Gerónimo de Aguilar, and I am from Écija. I lost my way in this manner: While in the war at Darién and during the conflicts and misfortunes of Diego de Nicuesa and Vasco Núñez de Balboa, in the year 1511, I accompanied Valdivia on a small caravel to Santo Domingo to inform the governor and admiral of what transpired and to procure men and provisions and 20,000 of the king's ducats. As we approached Jamaica, the caravel capsized on the shoals called Las Víboras. Twenty of us struggled aboard the ship's boat, without sail, water, or bread, and with only a dismal set of oars. We drifted for thirteen or fourteen days until the current, which is very strong and wide and follows the sun, cast us ashore in a province called Maya.

Along the way, seven, and I believe even eight, of us died from hunger. A malevolent cacique under whose power we fell sacrificed Valdivia and another four to his idols. (f. 11) Afterward, he and other Indians feasted on them. I and six others were left in cages to be fattened for another banquet and offering. In order to escape such an abominable death, we broke out of prison and fled to the woods, and God willed that we came across another leader who was an enemy of the first, a humane sort, called A Quin quz lord of Xamanzana.[66] He sheltered us and spared our lives, making us his servants. He died soon, and since then I have been with Taxmar,[67] his successor. Our

66. Victoria Bricker states that the correct spelling of this name is Ah Kin Cutz. *Ah kin* meant "priest" in classical Yucatec and served as a title. *Kutz* meant "tobacco," and *cutz* meant "oscellated turkey." They were both surnames in the sixteenth century. She adds that the correct spelling of the locale is Xamanzana, with *xaman* meaning "north"; Zama is the name of the town, either on Cozumel or on the northeast coast of Yucatan in the province of Ecab, and also the name of a lineage on Cozumel. Thus, Xamanzana referred to the northern part of the town of Zama; personal communication, 27 June 2007. See also Ralph L. Roys, *The Political Geography of the Yucatan Maya* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1957), 147.

67. Bricker believes that "Taxmar" must be a corruption of Ah May, the lord who rescued Aguilar, with *ah* replacing *ax* and *may* replacing *mar*, and with no function for the initial *T*. She adds that /r/ rarely occurs in Maya words and the phoneme never appears at the end of words; personal communication, 27 June 2007.

other five Spanish comrades died one by one, until only I remain, and one Gonzalo Guerrero, a sailor who is with Nachancan, lord of Chetumal.[68] He married a wealthy noblewoman from that land, fathered children with her, and is one of Nachancan's captains and much esteemed for his victories in the war against his neighbors. I sent him a letter from your Lordship, begging him to come with me, as we had the opportunity and the means. But he refused; I believe it was because he was ashamed to show his nose perforated, ears pierced, and hands and face painted in the style of that land and people. Or maybe it was because of his lust for his wife and love for his children.

Gerónimo de Aguilar's story frightened and awed his audience with its tale of that land of cannibalism and human sacrifice and with the misfortunes that he and his comrades had suffered. They gave thanks to God to see him safe from such inhumane and barbarous people and to have him as a true and accurate translator. Certainly, they thought it a miracle that Alvarado's ship had sprung a leak, which made them turn back to where a contrary wind forced them to stay until Aguilar came. Without a doubt, he was the translator and interpreter who would gain rightful knowledge of the land where Hernando Cortés set foot.

I have therefore wanted to explain at length the way in which he appeared as one of the notable elements of this story. I will not silence the fact that Gerónimo de Aguilar's mother lost her mind when she heard that her son was a captive of men who ate men, and afterward, every time she would see meat grilled or on a spit, she would cry out, "Woe is me! That is my son and my own! **Do not eat it as it grieves me dearly.**"

[Chapter 13].[69] Cortés **Orders the** Destruction of the Cozumel Idols

The day after Aguilar appeared, Cortés spoke again with the people of Cozumel to learn more about the situation of the island, since it would be better understood through such a loyal interpreter. Aguilar was to strengthen their veneration of the cross, driving them from their idols, as this is the true path to abandon their gentile ways and become Christians. And in truth, only war and warriors drive these Indians from their idols, bestial rites, and the abominable bloody sacrifices and eating of men, which go directly against God and nature. In this way, they more quickly and easily receive, hear, and believe the preachers, and they accept the

68. On the Yucatan peninsula.

69. [C.: **Chapter 12**]. We have subsequently numbered the chapters sequentially throughout the text without further comment.

Holy Scripture and baptism of their own free will, which is what the Christian faith stands for.

As soon as Gerónimo de Aguilar preached and counseled them on their salvation, whether because of his words or because they had already begun on their own, they were pleased to see (f. 11v) destroyed the last of their idols, **their bestial rites**, and gods. As they themselves helped in breaking and dashing what they had so recently worshipped, soon our Spaniards left no idol standing or in one piece. In every chapel and altar they placed a cross or the image of our Lady, whom all those islanders adored with great devotion and prayers, lighting incense and offering partridges, maize, fruit, and other items they often brought to the temple. They became so devoted to the image of our Lady Santa María that they would take her to the Spanish ships that stopped at the island, shouting, "Cortés! Cortés!" and singing, "María, María," as they did to Alonso de Parada, Pánfilo de Narváez, and to Cristóbal de Olid when they passed by here. And what is more, they begged Cortés to leave someone to teach them how to believe in and serve the Christian God; but he refused, fearing they might kill him and because he had brought few clergy and friars with him. In this he made the wrong choice, since they truly wanted **and implored for** someone**. Since that time, however, the land has filled with Christians.**

Chapter 14. How the Island **Was Named** Cozumel **Santa Cruz**

The natives call the island Acuçamil or, in a corrupt form, Cozumel. Juan de Grijalva, who was the first Spaniard to go inland, named the island Santa Cruz because he saw it on May 3.[70] It is ten leagues long and three leagues wide, although some say more and others say less. It is twenty degrees north of the Equinox, more or less, and five or six leagues from Isla Mujeres. It has a population of up to two thousand men in a total of three towns. The houses are made of stone and brick with a roof of straw or branches, and some even with slabs of stone. The temples and towers are made of stone masonry and well built. The little water available is rain and well water. Calach Uni is a title meaning cacique, or king. The people are dark skinned, go about naked, and when they dress, they wear a cotton cloth to cover their genitals. They wear their hair long and braid it very carefully around their forehead. Since they are great fishermen, fish is their principal food. They have plenty of maize for bread and an abundance of good fruit; they also have much honey,

70. In Catholic liturgy, the Feast of the Invention of the Cross.

although somewhat bitter, and apiaries of one thousand and more small beehives. As they did not know how to make candles from beeswax, we taught them, leaving them surprised and happy.

They raise fox-faced, barkless dogs that they castrate and fatten to eat; a few are used for breeding. There are hills and pastures with land for grazing that sustain many deer, wild boars, rabbits, and small hares. Our Spaniards killed large quantities of these with crossbows, harquebuses, dogs, and hounds. They ate fresh meat, dried what was left, and cured much of it in the sun. The natives are idolaters; they practice circumcision,[71] sacrifice children, but not many, and often substitute dogs instead. For the rest, they are a poor people, but good-hearted, and very devout in their false beliefs.

Chapter 15. The People of Cozumel's Religion and Temples, or *Cues*[72]

(f. 12) The temple resembles a square tower, wide at the base with steps on all sides. It rises vertically from the middle. There is an empty room on top covered with straw, with four doors or windows opening to the anterooms or corridors. Idols were stored in this chapel-like room or were painted on the wall. This tower was similar to the one on shore, which enclosed a strange idol, not like the rest, although there are many different ones. The idol, made of fired clay, was large and hollow. It was attached to the wall with mortar. Behind the idol was a small room resembling a sacristy that housed its temple and ministers. The priests cut a small secret door in the wall by the idol, through which one of them would enter and get inside the idol, from where he would respond to the devout worshipers who asked for favors. With this trick, the simple

71. *Retajarse*, "circumcision," may refer to penile scarification or blood sacrifice among native peoples. However, some readers may have been inclined to think of the practice of circumcision, which was fashionable in some circles in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as connecting Jews to American indigenes. Indeed, C., who seems not to dispute the notion of circumcision, tends to follow the writings of Enrico Martínez (1606) regarding the origins of the native peoples of New Spain. Martínez believes that the natives came from a place called Courland, which was part of the realm of Poland at one time, as both populations shared the same physical attributes and possessed similar social and psychological characteristics. But C. adds, "Who knows for certain?" As to the natives having been descendants of the Jews, C. believed that everyone descended from Adam and then Noah, but when Vespasian destroyed Jerusalem in 73, 11-House, the ancient Chichimeca had already been at Aztlan for twenty-four years. See C., *Las ocho relaciones y El memorial de Colhuacan*, ed. and trans., Rafael Tena (México, 1998), 1:307–13.

72. *Cue* is a corruption of *ku*, the word for "deity" in Yucatecan Maya. We thank Victoria Bricker for her assistance with the definition of this term; personal communication, 15 February 2007. Subsequently, the Spaniards adapted *cu* to mean temple, or pyramid.

folk believed everything their god said, whom they honored much more than other gods. They burned fragrant incense made of *copal*[73] **(**which is like an incense**)**, and offered bread, fruit, and blood sacrifices of partridges and other birds, dogs, and sometimes even humans. As this idol and oracle attracted many pious pilgrims and superstitious peoples from distant lands to the island of Cozumel, there were many temples and chapels. At the foot of the same tower, at the center of a well-made fence of stone and lime with battlements, was a limestone cross as high as ten *palmos*[74] which they worshiped as their rain god. In times of drought, they would go in a procession to devoutly offer sacrifices of partridges in order to appease the ire and anger shown them by the god. Along with that ordinary little bird's blood, they would burn a special resin as incense, sprinkling it with water. They were certain it would rain after this. Such was the religion of the people of Cozumel. No one ever found out how their devotion to that god of the cross originated because there is no sign whatsoever on the island or anywhere else in the Indies that anyone had preached the Holy Scripture before our time and by our Spaniards **(**as will be explained in more detail elsewhere**)**. From that moment, the Cozumel Indians revered the cross, as if long familiar with this sign.

[Chapter 16]. **In Which Is Told** the Story of the Shark, **and Other Marvels**

After he left Cuba, Cortés spent one month and a half doing what we have stated; he sailed from the island, leaving its natives on very friendly terms with the Spaniards. Accepting a large supply of honey and wax that they gave him, he went to Yucatan, hugging the shore to see if he could find the missing ship. When he reached Isla Mujeres, the weather calmed, so he remained there two days waiting for a wind. During that time he gathered salt from the many salt flats and caught a shark with hook and rope. They could not lift the shark on board because the small ship listed with the big fish. They killed the fish directly in the water, cut it in pieces, and hoisted it on board with block and tackle. They also found more than five hundred rations of salt pork in its stomach, including ten sides of salt pork that had been hung around the ships to leech

73. Nahuatl: *copalli*.

74. A Spanish unit of measure that denotes either the distance between the extended thumb and little finger or the vertical distance of the four fingers, from the index to the little finger, closed together. The measurement is equal to one-fourth of a *vara,* "a linear unit of measure equal to 0.84 meter, about 33 inches," and is divided into twelve *dedos*, "fingers."

the salt. (f. 12v) And, since the shark is insatiable **(**for this reason, some call it *ligurón*[75]**)**, when it found this provision, it swallowed it whole at its pleasure.

Its gullet contained a tin plate that had fallen from the ship of Pedro de Alvarado, three torn shoes, and a cheese. Although it seems incredible, this is what people say about sharks, for truly they will swallow anything. I have heard reliable worthy people who have seen these dead sharks many times and opened [them] up to find such things inside, that if one did not see them, one would never believe it. For example, a shark swallows one, two, or more sheepskins with head and horns intact, when they are thrown into the sea so as not to shear them.

A shark is a large and fat fish, some eight palmos in girth by twelve feet in length. Most have two rows of adjacent teeth resembling a saw or battlement. The mouth is in proportion to the body; the distended gullet is large; the skin is like that of a dogfish. The male has two reproductive organs, the female only one. She gives birth to twenty, thirty, and even forty pups at a time. The fish will attack a cow or horse grazing or drinking at the river's edge and will eat a man, as when one attempted to eat the Calach Uni from Cozumel. It bit the toes off of his foot when it could not take him whole, as others came to the rescue. The shark is so gluttonous that it will follow a ship to eat what is cast overboard; it will swim five hundred and even one thousand leagues, and it is so swift that it goes faster than the ship, even in good weather. And some say three times as fast, because at the ship's fastest speed the shark circles it two or three times and appears on the surface to see how it is doing. Its meat is not very good to eat because it is tough and tasteless, although it feeds an entire ship when cut in strips and salted or cured. The men of Cortés's fleet tell that they ate the cured meat they found inside the fish, that it tasted better than the rest, and many recognized their rations by the knots and cords.

[Chapter 17]. The Tides Rise Greatly at Campeche, but Not Nearby

The good weather allowed the fleet to set sail in search of the missing ship. Cortés had the brigantines and open ships enter the rivers and estuaries to look for it. While awaiting them at the Campeche shore, the ships were left stranded almost a league out to sea, thanks to the tide's

75. The Latin word for "shark" is *pristis*, and the word for "glutton" is *edax*, *vorax*, or *gorges*. *Ligurio* means "to lick, taste, be fond of dainty things," and it may well be the source for *ligurón/tiburón*, since the *-ón* ending is augmentative. We thank Stafford Poole, C.M., for his assistance in translating this term.

ebb and flow, for it rises only at this point in all the coast between Labrador and Paria [Venezuela]. No one knows why, and while many reasons are given, all are unsatisfactory; and they say that if it were not for the tides, they would jump ashore to avenge the injuries suffered there by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba.

While hugging the shoreline, they came upon a large estuary (now known as Puerto Escondido) with several small islands, and behind one was the ship they sought. Cortés and the rest were infinitely pleased to find it in good condition and all its men hale and hearty. The men had made an equal effort to be found, since they dreaded being alone and without provisions, (f. 13) thinking that the fleet had gotten lost or passed them by. They surely would not have survived without food for so long, had it not been for a greyhound. But since the animal kept them fed, and they were on the fleet's course, they waited for the captain even though they feared he might have encountered the same problems as Grijalva or Hernández de Córdoba. They all dropped anchor near the ship and were happy to see one another. When asked why they had so many pelts from deer, rabbits, and hares hanging from the rigging, the men from the lost ship replied how, when they arrived there, they had seen a dog wandering on the coast barking and digging [in the sand], its face toward the ship. When the captain and some others went on shore, they saw it was a fine greyhound that came toward them, wagging its tail. It jumped up on them with its forepaws, then ran into the woods nearby and soon returned with plenty of hares and rabbits. The next day it did the same, so they knew there was plenty of game on land. They went hunting with who knows how many crossbows they had stored on board, and so successful were they that not only did they have fresh meat all the while they were there (although it was Lent), they prepared dried venison and rabbit to supply them for a long time. As a reminder, they glued the rabbit and hare pelts to the rigging and stretched the deerskins out to dry in the sun. They never knew whether the greyhound had belonged to Córdoba or Grijalva.

[Chapter 18]. The Battle and Capture of Potonchan

Not wanting to stay long, the fleet left soon with everyone happy to have found their lost mates, and without stopping they reached the Río Grijalva (called Tabasco in the native language[76]). As the estuary looked too shallow for the larger ships, they did not enter but anchored instead

76. A large territory and important river along the southeastern coast of New Spain. Gerhard, *Southeast Frontier*, 35–47, states that most of Tabasco's inhabitants were Chontal

at the river's mouth. Numerous people, many of them armed and wearing feathers, came to look at the ships, and from the sea they seemed distinguished and handsome. They did not marvel at our men and caravels, since they had already encountered them when Juan de Grijalva had entered the same river. Cortés liked their looks and the lay of the land. He left a strong guard aboard the large ships, and taking the rest of the Spaniards and some artillery in the brigantines and in the boats (that were attached to the ship's stern), he entered the river, going against its strong current. They had gone little more than half a league when they saw a large town of adobe houses thatched with straw, surrounded by a fence of thick wood, with battlements and openings from which to shoot arrows and throw stones and sticks. Before our men reached the site, a large number of small boats (there called *ta hucup*[77]) full of armed men, ferocious and spoiling for a fight, sped to meet them. Cortés approached them making signs of peace and through Gerónimo de Aguilar asked for their welcome since they had not come to harm them but, as they were seafarers, needed to replenish their drinking water and purchase food. Therefore, he asked that they grant them what they needed and (f. 13v) [assured them that] they would pay [for it].

The men from the small ships replied courteously that they would relay the message to their town and return with an answer and food. On their return, they brought back five or six small boats with bread, fruit, and eight turkeys as a gift. Cortés sent back the message that this was hardly sufficient for their great need and for the many men in the large ships that the Indians could not see from their fenced town, and begged them either for more or for permission to enter the town to replenish themselves. Asking for a night to decide which request they would grant, the Indians retired to the town and Cortés to a small island in the river to await the decision the next day. Each thought to dupe the other: the Indians asked for the time so they could pack their clothing, take their women and children to the woods and thickets, and call the men to defend the town.

Cortés, in the meantime, gathered all the riflemen, harquebusiers, and many Spaniards from the ships and sent a scouting party upriver to look for a crossing. He managed both maneuvers without the Indians, busy with their own, finding out. All the Spaniards from the ships met with Cortés while the scouting party went so far upriver trying out the

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Maya speakers, although Nahuatl may have been spoken in a few areas. It was a major trade entrepôt.

77. Victoria Bricker tells us that *hucub* is the word for "dugout canoe" in the Cholan languages and can be reconstructed back to Proto-Mayan. *Ta* may be functioning as the preposition "in." Thus, *ta hucup* can be interpreted as "in the canoe." Personal communication, 15 February 2007.

currents that at less than half a league they found a crossing, although at waist level. They also found many thickets and woods on both river banks from which to approach the town without being seen or heard. As soon as he was notified, that same night Cortés ordered two captains, Alonso de Ávila and Pedro de Alvarado, each with one hundred and fifty Spaniards, to hide with a guide in the woods between the river and the town. He had two objectives: the first was that the Indians not learn there were more men on the island than before, and the second, that his men attack the town from the rear on hearing his signal.

At daybreak, up to eight boats more than the previous day filled with armed Indians came with some food to where our men were, saying that was all they could obtain as the townspeople had fled in fear of the Spaniards and their huge ships. Therefore, they asked the Spaniards to take what they offered, return to sea, and not bother or disturb the people of the land any longer. To this the translator responded that it was inhumane to let them die from hunger, and if they listened to the reason for their coming they would see how much good and profit they would gain. The Indians replied that they wanted no advice from people they did not know and even less to welcome them in their homes because they thought them terrible men, and domineering, and if they wanted water they could go to the river or dig wells on land, which is what they [the Indians] did when they were in need.

Then Cortés, seeing that words were of no use, said to them that he could not under any circumstance desist from entering their town and exploring the land in order to take possession and give an account of it to the greatest lord of the world, who had sent him there. For this reason, they should accept it as a good thing, since he wished to accomplish this through good means and, if not, he would place (f. 14) himself in his God's hands and those of his companions. The Indians said nothing more but that the Spaniards should leave and stop making threats in a foreign land, because under no circumstance would they allow him to invade or enter their town. Instead, they warned him that if he did not leave soon, they would kill him and all those with him.

Chapter 19. Which Narrates the Battle with the Indians of Potonchan

Cortés wished to meet all the necessary obligations with those barbarous people, and according to the mandates in the Instructions[78] of the monarchs of Castile, summon the Indians peacefully once, twice, and even

78. The reference is surely to the Requerimiento. For more about the Spaniards' purpose for this document in their dealings with native peoples, see Seed, *Ceremonies*, 69–99.

more times before making war against them [and] not enter into their lands and towns by force. Therefore, he again appealed to them in peace and friendship, promising good treatment and freedom and offering them news of such great benefit to their bodies and souls, that, after they knew of them, they would consider themselves fortunate. If they still refused to shelter him or heed his warnings, he challenged them [to fight] that afternoon before sunset, since (with the help of God) he planned to sleep in the town that night, whatever the harm to its inhabitants, who rejected his good friendship, dealings, and peace. They laughed much at this, and, making fun of him, they returned to their town to tell of the arrogant and ridiculous statements they believed they had heard.

When the Indians left, the Spaniards ate and shortly afterward armed themselves and climbed into the boats and brigantines to wait and see if the Indians returned with an affirmative reply. But as the sun began to set and they did not come, Cortés alerted the Spaniards who were waiting in ambush. Raising his shield and calling upon God, [LdeG: Santiago], and his advocate San Pedro, he attacked the town with close to two hundred Spaniards. When they reached the fence at the water's edge, the brigantines docked, the guns went off, and all jumped into the water up to their thighs. They began to attack the fence and battlements and fight their enemies, who had been shooting arrows and spears and throwing stones with slingshots and by hand. The Indians, seeing the Spaniards so near, fought intensely with spears from the battlements and constantly shot arrows through the wall's loopholes and crossbeams. They wounded almost twenty Spaniards, although the smoke, fire, and thunder of the shots horrified and inhibited them. On hearing and seeing so frightful a sight, which they had never before seen, they fell to the ground in fear, but did not abandon the fence or its defense (only their dead did). Instead, they nobly resisted the force and blows of their opponents and would not have let them enter had they not been assaulted from the rear.

However, when the three hundred Spaniards in ambush heard the artillery shot, which was their signal to attack, they assaulted the town. As all the townspeople were intently absorbed in fighting those facing them, who wanted to approach the town through the river, they found the place where they planned their entry deserted and the palace undefended. They rushed in, giving loud shouts and wounding anyone they encountered. Then (f. 14v) the people from the town realized their carelessness and tried to check the danger, but by doing so they relented where Cortés was fighting. At this, he and those who were fighting with him could now enter unopposed and in complete safety. And thus, some coming from one area and others from another, arrived all at once in the

square and continued their fight with the inhabitants. No one remained in town; there were only the dead and those taken prisoner, since the rest abandoned the town and ran into the woods (that were nearby) with the women who were already there.

The Spaniards searched the houses and found nothing but maize, turkeys, and some cotton goods, but scarcely any gold. No more than four hundred warriors remained to defend the town, and because they fought naked, much Indian blood was spilled. Many were wounded, and a few were taken captive. The dead were not counted.

Cortés took up residence in the idols' temple with all the Spaniards. They fit very comfortably, as it had a courtyard and some very large and fine rooms. They slept there that night under a strong guard, as in an enemy's house. But the Indians did not dare to try anything, and in this way Potonchan was taken, which was the first city that Cortés won by force in all that he discovered and conquered.

Chapter 20. Of the Demands and Replies Between Cortés and the People of Potonchan

The next morning, Cortés ordered the wounded and captured Indians to come before him and through his interpreter commanded that they go to their leader and the other inhabitants of the town, explaining that they were to blame for what had befallen them, and not the Christians, who had begged for peace so many times. If they wanted to return to their homes and town, they could do so safely, since he promised by his God that they would not be harmed in the least, but enjoy the best good treatment. If their lord did not trust his word and oath, Cortés would provide hostages as security, since he truly wished to meet and speak with him. From their lord Cortés wished to learn much that would be useful and would counter with news that would bring him joy and profit. If he chose not to come, he should know that Cortés would go find him to purchase the supplies.

He sent them off content and free, which they had not anticipated. The Indians left happily and told their other neighbors what had been ordered, but not one of them returned. Rather, they united against our men in a surprise attack, planning to take them unaware where they would be trapped and burned, if they could not avenge themselves in any other way.

Separately from these Indians, Cortés also sent some Spaniards by three paths that appeared to lead (as was later shown) to the town's farms and maize fields. This road took them to where there were many

Indians with whom they skirmished, hoping to capture their captain for questioning. The Indians told how all the inhabitants of the land and (f. 15) surrounding countryside were gathering to fight with all their power and force and give battle to those few strangers, killing and eating them as enemies and assailants. They added that they had agreed that if it was their bad luck to lose, henceforth they would serve [the Spaniards] as slaves do their masters. Cortés set them free like the others to tell the council and the captains not to try any madness or believe they could win and kill those few men they saw there. If they did not fight but abandoned their weapons, he promised to treat them as brothers and good friends. However, if they persisted in their enemy ways and waged war, he would punish them in such a way that they would never again take up arms against anyone like him and his Spaniards.

It was either because of what the messengers told them, or in order to spy, that twenty *principales*, "prominent townspeople," and persons of authority returned the next day to the town. They touched the earth with their fingers and raised them to the sky **(**which is their customary sign of salutation and respect**)**. They told Captain Cortés that the lord of that town and other neighboring lords, their friends, had sent them to beg him not to burn their town, and that they would bring him provisions. Cortés replied that his men were not the kind to quarrel with walls [uselessly], or with other men, unless there was a great and just reason, nor had they come to do harm but good. The sooner their lord came the sooner he would see the truth in what Cortés said, and he and all of them would then know and enjoy great mysteries and secrets they had never before known.

At this, the twenty ambassadors or spies took their leave, stating that they would return with the answer, and they did so, because the next day they brought some food, excusing themselves for not bringing more, as the people had dispersed because of their fear. They accepted no pay for the food, save for some small bells and other trinkets, but affirmed that their lord would not come under any circumstance, since he had gone frightened and ashamed to a stronghold far from there. However, he would send **local** trustworthy and creditable people with whom Cortés could speak his mind, and as far as food was concerned, whenever Cortés wanted, he could send for it and purchase it. Cortés was very pleased with this answer, for it gave him the opportunity and just cause to enter the land and learn its secrets. He dismissed the Indians, informing them that the next day he would go with his people for provisions for his army and to make this known among the natives so they would have sufficient supplies, as they would be well paid. But food was only the half of it; the other was caution, because Cortés was

not so interested in eating as he was in finding gold, since until then he had seen little. The Indians were stalling until they could assemble with many weapons.

The next morning, Cortés marshalled three companies of eighty Spaniards each and assigned Pedro de Alvarado, Alonso de Ávila, and Gonzalo de Sandoval[79] as their captains, along with some Indians from Cuba to serve them and carry maize or fowl, if they found any. He sent them along different routes and ordered them not to take anything without paying for it or by force, and not to exceed one and one-half leagues, or at most two, so they could return by nightfall. He remained with the other Spaniards keeping watch over the town and the artillery. One of the captains (f. 15v) decided to go with his company to a village where there was an infinite number of armed Tabascans guarding their maize fields. He asked them to give or barter maize for merchandise. They responded they did not wish to, that they needed it for themselves. With this, some took up arms and began to fight fiercely. Since there were many more Indians than Spaniards, and they shot innumerable arrows that caused serious injuries, the Spaniards retreated to a house.

There, our men defended themselves very well, although with an obvious fear of being set on fire. All or most would certainly have perished had the routes taken by the other two companies not converged on the same furrows and fields. But it pleased God that the other two captains came almost at the same time to the same village during the Indians' greatest uproar and attack on the house where the eighty Spaniards were trapped. On their arrival, the Indians stopped their attack and regrouped elsewhere; the surrounded Spaniards then came out and joined the others. They headed toward the village while continuing their skirmishes with their enemies who came after them with their arrows. Cortés had already headed there with one hundred **Spaniards** and artillery in order to assist them, as two Indians from Cuba had come to alert him of the danger the eighty Spaniards were in. He met them one mile from the town, and since the enemy continued to attack and wound their rear [guard], he gave orders to fire two small falconets, which stopped them in their tracks. He entered the town with all his men. That day several Indians were killed and many Spaniards badly wounded.

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79. Thomas (*Conquest*, 123, and *Who's Who*, 120) notes that, like Cortés, Sandoval was from Medellín, and he proved second only to Pedro de Alvarado in his loyalty to Cortés, as well as in his prowess in combat. He was in his early twenties when he joined Cortés before departing for New Spain. Later, he was rewarded with encomiendas for his support and accomplishments. He died in 1528 after returning to Spain.

[Chapter 21]. The Battle of Cintla, **or Tzintla, that Cortés and His Men Fought with the Indians of Cintla**

No one slept that night. Rather, Cortés ordered the wounded taken aboard the ships along with clothing and equipment and those guarding the fleet to disembark with thirteen horses.[80] This was done before dawn, but not without the Tabascans having noticed it. By sunrise, Cortés had already attended mass[81] and placed in the field close to five hundred Spaniards, thirteen horses, and six pieces of artillery. These horses were the first to tread the land now called New Spain. He formed his men in good order, arranged the artillery, and marched forward toward Cintla,[82] where the fight had taken place the day before, expecting to find the Indians there.

When our men arrived, the Indians also started to march in good order, forming five squadrons of eight thousand men each.[83] Since their meeting was in fallow fields and plowed land among many irrigation ditches and deep rivers, which were dangerous to cross, our men had difficulty and fell out of formation. So Cortés departed along with his horsemen in order to look for a better passage toward the left and to shield himself behind some trees in order to ambush his enemies from the rear or the side. The footmen proceeded straight on, stepping through ditches and dodging what the enemies threw at them. They entered into some deep, cut furrows full of water, where the Indians, knowing the right passages to take and easily jumping over the ditches, came to shoot arrows and even to throw sticks and sling stones. Thus, although our men wounded them and killed some (f. 16) with crossbows and harquebuses, and with artillery when they could aim to shoot, they could not shake them off because they hid behind trees and palisades. And if the natives of Potonchan waited on purpose **(**as it is to be believed**)** in that dangerous place, it was not because they were barbarians or ignorant of war.

The Spaniards left that difficult passage and entered another that was slightly better, for it was spacious, flat, and with fewer streams, and there they took better advantage of their firearms to hit on target and of the

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80. Cortés had loaded sixteen horses on board when he departed from Cuba. Thomas, *Conquest*, 152–53, estimates the cost of each horse to have been at least three thousand *pesos*, "a silver coin equivalent to 28.7 grams."

81. Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo said mass; two priests were traveling with Cortés. Thomas, *Conquest*, 156–57, discusses Cortés's spirituality at some length.

82. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico, 1517–1521*, trans. A. P. Maudsley (New York, 1956), 57, states that Cintla was a subject town of Tabasco.

83. One must be circumspect regarding the exact numbers of native warriors. In this instance, the ratio appears to have been eighty indigenous to one Spaniard.

swords they brought to fight in hand-to-hand combat. However, since the Indians were countless, they pressed hard on the Spaniards and crowded them in such a tight space that they fought back-to-back to protect each other. Even so, they were in great distress and danger, since they did not have room to shoot their artillery or horsemen to drive off their enemies. While they were thus fallen and ready to flee, Francisco [de] Morla appeared on a dapple-gray horse and assaulted the Indians, making them yield somewhat. Then the Spaniards, thinking that it was Cortés who came and having more room, assailed the enemy, killing several. After this the horseman disappeared, and with his absence the Indians closed in on the Spaniards, putting them in the same circumstance as before. The horseman returned, positioned himself next to our men, overran the enemies, and made them yield; whereupon our men, feeling the support of the horseman, lunged vigorously at the Indians, killing and harming many of them. But at the peak of the attack the horseman vanished, and they were unable to see him. Since the Indians no longer saw the horseman either **(**from whom they fled in fear, believing him a Centaur[84]**)**, they turned against the Christians with spirited boldness and handled them worse than before. The horseman returned for the third time and made the Indians flee, wounded and frightened. The footmen rushed forward in the same manner, wounding and killing [the Indians].

At this point Cortés arrived with the rest of the horsemen, weary of going by roundabout ways and crossing ditches and hills, which was all there was around there. [The footmen] told him what they had seen the horseman do and asked whether he was a member of his company. Since Cortés responded that no horseman had been able to come, they believed that he was the Apostle Santiago,[85] the patron saint of Spain. Then Cortés said, "Onward, comrades, for God and heavenly San Pedro are with us." Upon saying this, Cortés with his horsemen charged at top speed right through the enemies and drove them far enough out of the ditches to spear easily and thus disperse them. The Indians then left the open field and, without anyone stopping, they fled into the woods and thickets. The footmen arrived and took up the chase, killing more than three hundred Indians, not counting many others wounded by *escopetas*[86] and crossbows.

84. There is no evidence that these half-horse, half-man creatures from Greek mythology were any part of either Maya or Nahua lore.

85. Fully familiar with the Spaniards' pantheon of Catholic saints and himself a reporter of miraculous events in Mexico City during his time, C. would have had little difficulty taking this account at face value. Díaz del Castillo, *Discovery*, 50, says nothing of an apparition during this first major battle.

86. A type of weapon commonly employed at the time, before the introduction of muskets.

That day, more than seventy Spaniards were wounded by arrows and even stones during battle. Either because of the great heat that is so extreme there or because of the waters that our Spaniards drank from those rivers and ponds, they were afflicted with a sharp pain in the lower back, which made more than one hundred fall to the ground, who then had to be carried or helped to walk. But God willed all their pain to disappear that night, and by morning they were well. **(**When they saw themselves delivered from the arrows and multitude of Indians they had been fighting**)**, our Spaniards felt no little gratitude to (f. 16v) our Lord who had miraculously saved them. They all said that three times they had seen the horseman on the dapple-gray horse fight on their side against the Indians, as has been stated before, and that it was Santiago, our patron saint. Hernando Cortés would rather it have been San Pedro, his special advocate; but no matter who he was, it was considered a miracle, as it certainly seemed one. Not only did the Spaniards see him, but the Indians also noticed him because of the damage that he inflicted every time he charged their squadron, and because they felt that he blinded and confused them. This was told by the prisoners taken in battle.

[Chapter 22]. **How the Cacique of** Tabasco Befriended the Christians

Cortés released some of the captives and dispatched them to tell their lord and everybody else that he was aggrieved by the harm done to both parties on account of their fault and stubbornness, since God was witness to his innocence and restraint. However, he said that despite all this, he pardoned their error on the condition that they come within two days to render a just explanation and satisfaction of their evil behavior and to negotiate peace and friendship as well as to learn about other mysteries he wished to make known to them. He warned that if they did not come by that time he would enter their land to destroy, burn, spoil, and slaughter every man he might encounter, great or small, armed or unarmed. Having sent those men off with the message, he returned to the town along with all his Spaniards in order to rest and treat the wounded.

The messengers carried out their mandate well. The next day more than fifty high-ranking Indians came to ask to be pardoned for what had happened and also for license to bury their dead with safe conduct so that their lords as well as the principales from the town might safely come. Cortés granted their request, warning them not to deceive or lie to him anymore, nor to conspire again because that would result in greater harm to them and their land. He added that he would not hear any more

ambassadors if their lord and his friends and neighbors did not come in person. Whether because of such fierce and harsh commands and protest such as this or the previous one, or because they thought their strength and their arms unequal to fight and resist those few Spaniards whom they held invincible, the lords and principales agreed to go see and talk to them and their captain.

Therefore, at the end of the set term the lord of the town came to Cortés, along with another four or five of his neighbors and a good company of Indians. They brought him bread, turkeys, fruit, and other provisions for camp and even four hundred gold pesos' worth in small jewels and some turquoise stones of little value, as well as twenty female slaves to bake bread and prepare meals for the army.[87] Thus, they thought to do them a great service since they saw them without women when every day it was necessary to grind and bake maize bread, work with which women busy themselves at great length. They craved forgiveness for everything that had happened, begged him to receive them as friends, and delivered themselves into his hands and those of the Spaniards, (f. 17) offering their land, property, and bodies. Cortés received and treated them very well. He gave them some barter goods, which made them quite happy, and he distributed the twenty slave women among the Spaniards as companions. The horses and mares that were tied in the temple's courtyard where the Indians passed through began to neigh when reveille was played. The Indians asked, "What did the horses say?" They replied that they quarreled because [the Spaniards] did not punish the Indians for having fought them. Then the Indians gave the horses flowers and turkeys to eat, asking their pardon.[88] **They were such simpletons.**

87. Gold jewelry ("turquoise" stones, which were probably *chalchiuitl* and valued dearly among the natives) and twenty women seemed to be a standard gift from indigenous kings. See Chapter 65 (f. 52), where the Spaniards reach Amecameca (Amaquemecan), Chimalpahin's hometown. Elsewhere, he tells of two Amecameca kings who went to greet the Spaniards and how they brought gold and jewelry of precious stones as well as forty commoner women whom they had bathed, painted, adorned, and dressed to appear as though they were the maiden daughters of nobles. What C. and LdeG omit is that one of the "slaves" was Malintzin, the young woman who became Cortés's principal translator and facilitated the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan.

88. "Flowers" in this instance is generic for *rosas*. Not knowing what to make of the four-legged beasts, the Nahuas for many years referred to them as *mazatl*, "deer." For additional information about indigenous dealings with Spanish horses, see William B. Taylor, "Santiago's Horse: Christianity and Colonial Indian Resistance in the Heartland of New Spain," in *Violence, Resistance, and Survival in the Americas: Native Americans and the Legacy of Conquest*, ed. William B. Taylor and Franklin Pease G. Y. (Washington, DC, 1994), 153–89.

[Chapter 23]. Questions that Cortés Asked **the Cacique of** Tabasco

Many things happened between our men and these Indians because they did not understand one another, and there was much to laugh about. After they had conversed and saw that the Spaniards did not harm them, they brought their wives and children to town, in no small number and no cleaner than gypsies. Among the matters that Cortés addressed and discussed with the Tabasco[89]—through translation and mediation of Gerónimo de Aguilar—there were five issues: the first was whether there were gold or silver mines in the land, how they exploited them, and where they had obtained the little they were wearing; the second was what was their reason to deny him their friendship, for they had not done so to the captain[90] who had come a year earlier with his fleet; the third was why they, being so many, fled from so few people; the fourth was to give them to understand the greatness and might of the emperor and king of Castile; and the last was a sermon and explanation of the faith of Jesus Christ.

Regarding the matter of the land's gold and wealth, **(**the lord replied**)** that they did not covet wealth but wished to live satisfied and at ease. Thus, he was neither able to say what a mine was or where they searched for gold beyond what they had at their reach, and that was a small amount. However, farther inland toward where the sun hides, much gold could be found, and the people there were more interested in it than they were. As to the captain who had been there previously, he said that since the men and ships he brought with him were the first of that size and aspect to arrive in his land, so he had spoken with them and asked what they wanted. Since they replied that they wanted to trade for gold and nothing else, he had willingly welcomed them. However, now, in seeing more and larger vessels, he thought that they had returned to take what was left of them. Moreover, he felt insulted that he had been tricked in this manner, as lords of lesser rank had not done this to him. As for the rest, concerning the war he said that they held themselves to be **more** courageous and valiant than other peoples who bordered their land, since nobody could seize their clothing in fight or their women or their children for sacrifice. He thought the same of these few foreigners, but he found he had sorely deceived himself after testing their strength, since they had not been able to kill even one. He added that they were blinded by the glare of their swords, and their blows and wounds were great, lethal, and incurable. He also said that the noise and fire of the artillery

89. This reference is apparently to an individual ruler, rather than to the place named in the title and elsewhere.

90. There were at least four voyages of reconnaissance along the coast, but the reference is most likely to Grijalva. See Thomas, *Conquest*, 98–115.

astonished them more than thunder and lightning or thunderbolts from the sky, because of the damage and death that they caused wherever they struck. Moreover, the horses amazed and frightened them, both because of their mouths, which seemed about to swallow them, and because of the speed with which they caught up with them, despite their being swift and good runners. Finally, he explained that since it was an animal (f. 17v) they had not seen before, the first one they had fought struck terror in them, even though it was only one, and after a while there were so many that they were unable to withstand the scare and fury of their charge, thinking that man and horse were one. **However, they realized the truth afterward (as was their nature).**

[Chapter 24]. How the Indians of Potonchan Destroyed Their Idols and Worshiped the Cross

After this account, Cortés realized that the land was not for the Spaniards, nor did it suit him to settle where there was no gold, silver, or other riches. Thus, he decided to press on westward to better discover the land where there was gold. However, first he told [the natives] that the lord **(**in whose name he and his company acted**)** was the king of Spain [don Carlos V], emperor of Christians, and the greatest prince in the world. He was served and obeyed by more kingdoms and provinces than anyone else; his reign and government were, according to divine justice, just, holy, peaceful, and gentle, and universal rule was his. Therefore, they should yield to him as his subjects, and if they did, they would secure many great benefits for their laws, government, and customs.

Concerning their religion, he criticized their blindness and great vanity in worshiping their many gods, offering them human blood and believing that those statues could cause good or evil since they were mute, without a soul, and fashioned by their own hands. He explained to them that there was one God who had created the sky, the earth, and man, adding that Christians worshiped and served that God and everyone should worship and serve Him as well. After having first declared to them the great mysteries that the son of God had suffered on the cross, he preached to them so long that they destroyed their idols and accepted the cross. In the presence of many devout Indians and a profusion of tears from the Spaniards, a cross was erected in the main temple of Potonchan. Our people knelt to kiss and worship it, followed by the Indians, whom Cortés then dismissed, and everyone left to have his meal.

Cortés asked them to return in two days to observe Palm Sunday. Since they were religious people and could come in safety, not only their town but the people of the surrounding areas came in such great numbers

that the Spaniards were amazed at how quickly they brought together so many thousands of men and women. All of these people committed their obedience and service to the king of Spain through Cortés and declared themselves friends of the Spaniards. They were the first vassals that the emperor had in New Spain.

When it was time [for mass] on Sunday, because of the great number of people Cortés ordered many palm fronds cut and piled as if on a table but out of doors and had the service performed with the best ornaments available. The Indians were attentive to the pomp and ceremony, the procession, and the feast and mass that were celebrated. They were pleased, and our men (f. 18) embarked with the palm fronds in their hands. Cortés did not deserve any less praise in doing this than in his victory, since in all his actions he conducted himself with wisdom and valor. He left those Indians with the faith and the town free and unharmed, not taking any slaves or sacking it. Nor did he barter anything, although he stayed there over twenty days.

The people call the town Potonchan, which means "Place That Stinks," and our people call it "Victoria." The lord was called Tabasco, and this is why the first Spaniards named the river Río Tabasco. Juan de Grijalva later named it after himself so that his last name would not be forgotten so easily. Those who discover and settle should do likewise, that is, perpetuate their names. This is a large town, but it does not have the twenty-five thousand houses that some say. Because each house stands alone like an island, it looks larger than it really is. The houses are of good size and well built of bricks or stone with mortar. There are also others of adobe and sticks and covered with straw or boards. The dwellings are raised from the ground because of the mist and humidity of the river, and to protect them from fire each house is separated one from the other. They have better buildings for recreation outside the town than within it.

They have dark complexions, go almost naked, and eat human flesh from sacrifices. Their weapons are bows, arrows, slings, spears, and lances. Other items used for defense are shields, helmets, and something similar to a cuisse made from wood or tree bark [LdeG: and some are made with very thin gold]. They also wear a certain kind of armor made of quilted cotton strips wrapped around the chest.

[Chapter 25]. On the Río Alvarado, Which the Indians Called Papaloapan

After Cortés left Potonchan, he entered a river called Alvarado because that captain was the first to explore it. However, the people who live on the riverbanks call it Papaloapan. It originates in Aticpan near the

Sierra de Colhuacan, springing from foothills which are topped by a beautiful peak, round like the shape of a spindle, six hundred *estados*[91] high, and covered with trees where the natives made many blood sacrifices. It is very deep and clear, filled with good fish, and more than one hundred *pasos*[92] wide, and is fed by the Quiotepec, Usila, Chimantlan, Quauhcuezpaltepec, Tuxtlan, Teyuciyocan, and other smaller rivers, all of which carry gold. It flows into the sea by three channels, one through sand, another through mud, and the other through rocks. The river runs through good land with a pleasant riverbank, and it creates many inlets due to frequent floods. One is between Otlatitlan and Quauhcuezpaltepec,[93] two good towns.

The inlet or lagoon swarms with fish. There are many shad the size of tuna and also many reptiles that are called *iguanas* on the islands, but here are called *quauhcuezpaltepec*.[94] They resemble colorful lizards, having small round heads, thick bodies, bristled necks, and long, thin tails that they twist and roll like a greyhound's. The iguana has four feet with four fingers each and claws like a bird's. The teeth are sharp, although it does not bite but clicks them to make noise. Its color is dark, and it can subsist a long time without food. Iguanas lay eggs like a chicken, with a shell, yolk, and whites that are small, round, and good to eat. The meat tastes like rabbit and even better. The natives eat it during Lent instead of fish (f. 18v) and when meat is allowed, as a substitute, for it is said to belong to both elements and therefore suited for both seasons. It is harmful to people with *bubas*.[95] These animals come out of the water, climb the trees, and roam the land. They startle all who come upon them, even when familiar with them, so fierce is their appearance. They swell when their bellies are rubbed on the sand, which is a novel secret.

There are also manatees, turtles, and other very large fish unknown to us, and sharks and sea lions that come on land to sleep and snore loudly. Each female sea lion gives birth to two pups and nurses them with milk since they have two teats on their chest between their arms. Sharks and sea lions are perpetual enemies, and they fight vigorously: the shark in order to eat, the sea lion not to be eaten. However, many sharks abound for each

91. A Spanish linear measure equal to 1.67 meters.

92. A *paso* is approximately three feet.

93. Gerhard, *Guide*, 85, describes Quauhcuezpaltepec as a "large and prosperous Popolucan kingdom," whose inhabitants spoke a Maya dialect related to Mixe.

94. Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, Book 11: *Earthly Things*, ed. and trans. Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. O. Anderson (Salt Lake City, UT, and Santa Fe, NM, 1963), 61, identifies this animal as *quauhcuetzpali*, "iguana." *Quauhcuetzpaltepec* translates as "On the Mountain of the Iguana."

95. Commonly said to be a virulent form of syphilis and descriptive of the skin lesions typical of stage two syphilis, although it might also refer to a primary chancre.

sea lion. There are many large and small birds whose colors and shapes are new to us: black ducks with white wings highly prized for their feathers, which in lands where there is none are sold for the value of a slave. Also, small white herons much esteemed for featherwork, and other fowl like roosters, called *Teoquechol,*[96] or Bird God, whose feathers are worked with gold to make jewelry; and if the featherwork were durable, nothing would be more desirable. Some birds resemble wood pigeons, white and dark, with beaks like a duck's beak and one foot webbed like a duck's and the other with claws like a hawk's, so it can fish when it swims and hunt when it flies. There are also many birds of prey, such as sparrow hawks, goshawks, hawks, and other kinds that live and feed on tame animals, such as cormorants that catch fish wonderfully, and others with neck and beak like a stork's, except that they are even longer and stranger. There are numerous pelicans of many colors the size of geese, which sustain themselves on fish, with a beak about sixteen inches long, and they do not control the upper part, but the lower. A pouch goes from the beak to the chest where they store and gulp down ten pounds of fish and a pitcher of water. They easily regurgitate what they eat. I heard that one of these birds swallowed a black infant, and because it was unable to fly, it was captured. The lagoon and the lands nearby sustain countless hares, rabbits, monkeys of many sizes, hogs, deer, lions, tigers, and an animal called *ayotochtli*, "armadillo," which is no bigger than a cat, with the face of a duck, the feet of a porcupine or hedgehog, and a long tail. It is covered with shells that resemble horse armor that shrink like cuisses and into which it retreats like a turtle. Its tail is covered with little shells and the head with a crown piece of the same, leaving the ears exposed. It is, in sum, neither more nor less than an armored horse, and this is why the Spaniards call it "the shielded one" or "the armored one." The Indians call it ayotochtli, which means "gourd rabbit."

[Chapter 26]. The Warm Reception Given Cortés in San Juan de Ulúa

The Spaniards embarked and set sail to the west, remaining as close to land as possible. They were close enough to see people walking along the coast. But since there was no harbor they were unable to anchor their large vessels safely. On Holy Thursday, they arrived at San Juan de Ulúa, which seemed like a port to them. The natives call this place Chalchicohuecan.[97] The fleet put in and dropped (f. 19) anchor.

96. Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, 11:20, lists a *teoquechol*, which he identifies as a "roseate spoonbill." An alternate name is *tlauhquechol.*

97. Chalchiuhcuecan in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 54; Chalchicueyecan in Thomas,

They had just anchored when two *acalles*[98] **(**which are like canoes**)** came looking for the captain of the vessels, saw the flags and banner of the flagship, and approached it. They asked for the captain and when pointed out to them they made a reverence and said that Teudilli,[99] governor of that province, had sent them to investigate what people they were, where they were from, what they were coming for, what they were looking for, and whether they intended to stop there or to continue ahead. **(**Even though Aguilar did not completely understand them**)** Cortés had them brought on board his ship, thanked them for their trouble and visit, and treated them to a meal with wine and preserves. He told them that the next day he would go on land to see and talk to the governor, and asked that [the governor] not be upset at his disembarking since he meant no harm but rather much benefit and pleasure. They accepted some of the barter goods, yet, suspecting evil, ate and drank with caution even though they enjoyed the wine. They asked for some wine and preserves for the governor and departed.

The following day was Good Friday, and Cortés went on land with his boats full of Spaniards. He then ordered ashore the artillery and the horses, and little by little, all his men of war and native servants, the latter about two hundred men from Cuba. He took what seemed to them the best place among the sand dunes on the shore and set up his camp, fortifying himself. Since there are many trees around there, the Cuban servants quickly put up enough huts from tree boughs for everyone.

Many Indians came to the Spaniards' camp from a small place nearby as well as from other places in order to see what they had never seen before. They brought gold to barter for the items similar to what the natives in the acalles had obtained, and much bread and food cooked according to their custom with hot pepper, **which is chile**, to give or sell to our people. In exchange, the Spaniards gave them pieces of glass, mirrors, scissors, knives, pins, and other such items with which they returned to their homes and with no little happiness showed their neighbors. All those simple men showed great delight and contentment with the small things they obtained through barter. The Spaniards noted that they came back the next day and many others also loaded with gold jewels, turkeys, bread, and cooked food, which provisioned the Spanish army. They took in exchange for all that only a few bead strings, needles, and ribbons, but

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Conquest, 175. Gerhard, *Guide*, 360, has Chalchicueyecan (and hereinafter) and states that it is located along the coast near Veracruz.

98. Nahuatl: *acalli*, "water-house"; also "boat" or "canoe."

99. It is not clear if this unusual spelling refers to a personal name or a title. Tendile (for Teuhtlilli) in Díaz del Castillo, *Discovery*, 70. Tentlil in Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 12: *The Conquest of Mexico* (Salt Lake City, UT, and Santa Fe, NM, 1975), 2, 5.

felt so well compensated and wealthy that they were overwhelmed with pleasure and joy and even believed that they had deceived the foreigners, taking the glass for precious stones.

Seeing the large amount of gold that those people brought and bartered so foolishly for trinkets and trifles, Cortés ordered it proclaimed in camp that nobody take gold under grave penalty; they were to act as if they did not know about it, or want it, so as not to seem moved by greed, and their effort and intention directed only toward that. He dissembled in order to determine just what the display of gold was for and if the Indians did it to test whether the Spaniards were motivated by gold.

On (f. 19v) Easter Sunday morning, Teutlili [*sic*], or Quitaluor[100] **(**as some say**),** came to camp some eight leagues' distance from Cotosta, **or Cuetlaxtlan,**[101] where he lived. He brought more than four thousand unarmed men; however, most of them were well dressed, with some wearing rich cotton garments as they accustom. The rest were almost naked and loaded with food to eat, things that were of great and unusual abundance. He greeted Captain Cortés according to their custom, burning incense and straw dipped in blood from his own body. He presented the provisions to him, giving him some gold jewels, rich and very well wrought, and other novel items made from feathers of fine craftsmanship. Cortés embraced and received him joyfully, and after greeting the rest he gave him a silk garment, a medallion, a glass necklace, many strings of beads, mirrors, scissors, hooks, belts, shirts, kerchiefs, and other wares made of leather, wool, and iron which among us have little value but which they hold in high esteem.

Chapter 27. How Cortés Spoke with Teudilli, a Servant of **King** Moteuczoma[102]

Cortés had done all these things without a translator because Gerónimo de Aguilar did not understand these Indians, who spoke a very different language from the one he knew. This was a source of concern and sadness

100. Quintalour in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 56.

101. Probably Cotaxtla, but Cotastla in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 58. Cotastan and Cotaxtla in Gerhard, *Guide*, 139 and 340, respectively. Gerhard describes Cuetlaxtlan as an important Mexica garrison for the collection of tribute.

102. LdeG has a great variety of spellings for this name. In English, the spelling is usually Montezuma; in Nahuatl, Moteucçoma; in Spanish, Moctezuma. Moteuczoma Xocoyotl (Moteuczoma hereinafter) was installed as tlatoani of Mexico Tenochtitlan in the year 10-Rabbit, 1502, on the day count 9-Deer, 14 April. He was the son of Axayacatzin (r. 3-House, 1469–2-House, 1481), also a ruler of Mexico Tenochtitlan, and was the last in the line of illustrious kings of that altepetl. Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón

for Cortés because he lacked an interpreter who could help him understand the governor and learn what there was to know about the land. However, his dilemma was resolved because one of the twenty women he had been given in Potonchan spoke with the governor's men and could understand them very well, as if they spoke her own language. So Cortés took her aside with Aguilar and promised her more than freedom if she would serve as a truthful interpreter between him and the people of her land, since she understood them. He told her that he wanted her to be his interpreter and secretary, and then he asked her who she was and where she was from.

Marina, **or Malintzin (which was her native given name, although she was christened with the name of Marina),** said that she came from around **Jalisco or** Xallixco, from a place called **Huilotlan which means "Place of Turtle Doves."**[103] She was the daughter of wealthy parents, who were relatives of the lord of the land where they were staying. When she was a young girl some merchants kidnapped her during a war and sold her at the market in Xicalanco, which is a large town in Coatzacoalco,[104] not far from Tabasco, where she fell into the hands of the lord of Potonchan. Marina and her female companions were the first Christians to be baptized in the whole of New (f. 20) Spain. She and Aguilar were the only true interpreters between our people and the people of that land.

Confident that he had a truthful and loyal interpreter in that slave and in Aguilar, Cortés attended mass at camp, had Teudilli sit next to him, and they ate together afterward. After eating they remained in his tent, along with the translators as well as with many Spaniards and Indians. Cortés explained to them that he was a vassal of don Carlos V of Austria, emperor of Christians, king of Spain, and lord of most of the world, whom many great kings and lords obeyed and served. The rest of the princes were happy to be his friends because of his goodness and might. This lord, don Carlos V, upon learning about that land and its lord, had sent Cortés there to visit him, Moteuczoma, on his behalf and to tell him some things in secrecy that he, Cortés, brought in writing and that he would be glad to hear. Cortés then requested that Teudilli

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Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuantzin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Susan Schroeder (Norman, 1997), 1:135, 149 (*CC* hereinafter).

103. The Nahuatl form of Marina is Malintzin, derived by changing [r] to [l], with the reverential suffix. Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana* (México, 1970), 157v (Molina hereinafter), defines huilotl as *paloma*, "dove."

104. Coatzacualco in Gerhard, *Guide*, 137–38, described as both a river (Coatzacoalcos) and a large region "stretching from the Gulf coast . . . to the middle of the Tehuantepec isthmus" and populated mainly by Nahuatl and Popoluca speakers as well as some Mixtec and Zapotec groups.

make this known to his lord in order to find out where he wished to receive the message.

Teudilli replied that he was very glad to hear about the greatness and goodness of the lord emperor, but added, to let him know, that his lord Moteuczoma was no less a king nor less good; rather, he marveled that there could be another so great a prince in the world. Moreover, since this was the case he would inform Moteuczoma of Cortés's message to ascertain his response to it. He trusted in his lord's clemency, who not only would be happy about this news but would reward the messenger.

After their talk, Cortés had the Spaniards come out with their weapons in mock battle, marching in an orderly manner to the sound and beat of the fife and drum. He had the horsemen run [their horses] and the artillery fired. He did this so the governor would report [all] that to his king. The Indians stared at the dress, look, and beards of the Spaniards. They marveled to see the horses eat and run and feared the glare of the swords. They fell flat to the ground at the blows and clatter of the artillery and thought that the heavens were falling [as if] by thunder and lightning. And about the ships, they said that their god Quetzalcoatl came bearing his [own] temples on his back, as he was God of Air, and had gone **to Tlapallan**,[105] where [the natives] awaited him.

After all of this, **Governor** Teudilli sent a dispatch to Moteuczoma in Mexico [Tenochtitlan],[106] telling him what he had seen and heard and asking for gold to give to the captain of those newly [arrived] people. He did this because Cortés had asked him whether Moteuczoma had gold. Since he answered in the affirmative, Cortés said, "Send it to me because my companions and I suffer from a disease of the heart that is cured by it."

It took a day and a night for the messages to arrive in Mexico from Cortés's camp—a distance of more than seventy leagues. The messengers also carried the painted images of the horses and of a horse and a man astride it, the like and number of their weapons which were firearms, and the number of bearded men. Of the vessels, [Teudilli] had already informed [Moteuczoma] about them when he first saw them, telling how

105. Tlapallan (somewhere toward Honduras) was apparently the destination of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl after he was forced to leave Tollan. For more about the legend and history of this important precontact figure, see H. B. Nicholson, *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl: The Once and Future Lord of the Toltecs* (Boulder, 2001).

106. Mexico (and hereinafter) refers to the Aztec capital, Mexico Tenochtitlan, and Moteuczoma's headquarters. Upon the fall of the capital, the Spaniards named it México (Mexico City), and it became the capital of New Spain. Three great *altepetl*, "kingdoms,"or "ethnic states," had joined together in 1430 to form what has been called the Triple Alliance, now commonly referred to as the Aztec empire.

many and how large they were. Teudilli had all of this painted realistically on cotton cloth so that Moteuczoma could see it. The message arrived quickly [from] so far because runners were located from place to place like post horses and passed the canvas and message to one another from hand to hand. So flew (f. 20v) the dispatch. It travels faster this way than in a horse relay, and this custom is more ancient than the use of horses. This governor also sent to Moteuczoma the clothing and many of the other things that Cortés gave him, all of which the Spaniards found later in his dressing room.

Chapter 28. The Gifts and Response that Moteuczoma Sent to Cortés

After the messengers were dispatched, Teudilli took his leave, promising to have an answer within a few days. He had more than a thousand huts of boughs built within two or three crossbow shots from the camp of our Spaniards, leaving two principales there as captains with up to two thousand men and women for the service of the Spaniards. He went to Cotasta **or Cuetlaxtlan**, his place of residence and dwelling. Those two captains were in charge of provisioning the Spaniards. The women ground and kneaded bread made from *centli*, which is **an ear of** maize. They cooked beans, meat, fish, and other things to eat. The men brought the food to the camp and as much wood and water as they needed. They also brought as much grass as the horses ate, something that was plentiful in their fields all year round. These Indians went inland to the neighboring towns and brought so many provisions for everyone that it was an amazing thing to see.

They spent seven or eight days with many visits from Indians, waiting for the governor and the answer from that great lord [Moteuczoma], as everyone called him. Then the governor came with a very rich and grand present that consisted of many blankets; cotton clothing both white and colored and embroidered according to their custom; many tufts and other beautiful feathers; some items made from gold and sumptuous feathers; and numerous finely wrought jewels and pieces of gold and silver. There were also two thin wheels, one of silver with the image of the moon that weighed 52 *marcos*[107] and another of gold with the shape of the sun and with plants and animals in relief, an exquisite work, that weighed 100 marcos. In that land they hold [the sun and the moon] to be gods, and they attribute to them the color of the metal

107. A Spanish unit of measure equal to 230.45 grams.

that resembles them. Each wheel was up to ten palmos wide and thirty palmos in circumference. This present must have been worth 20,000 ducats or more. According to what the Indians said, they had sent this present in order to give it to Grijalva, had he not left.

Teudilli answered that Moteuczoma, his lord, was glad to hear about and to become a friend of the king of **Castile** [LdeG: Spain], as he had been told that he was a mighty prince. He also was happy that people who were new, good, foreign, and never seen before had arrived in his land so that he could grant them all pleasure and honor. Therefore, [Cortés] should determine what he would need during the period of time that he planned to be there, for himself, his illness [curable by gold], his men, and the ships, and [Moteuczoma] would have everything fully provided for them. He added that if there was something in his land that [Cortés] would be pleased to take to his great Christian emperor, he would readily give it to him. As to seeing and speaking with one another, he considered it impossible because he himself was ill and could not come to the coast. It was very difficult and laborious for Cortés to visit Moteuczoma due to the many craggy mountains along the road (f. 21) as well as the vast sterile deserts that he had to cross, where he was bound to suffer from hunger, thirst, and other needs. Moreover, a large part of the land to be crossed belonged to his enemies, evil and cruel people who would kill him, knowing that he was traveling as his friend.

Moteuczoma and his governor presented all these obstacles as excuses to Cortés so that he would not proceed with his people, thinking that they could deceive him in this way, obstruct his voyage, and frighten him with **so many** difficulties and dangers; or hoping that some contrary weather would force the fleet to depart. However, the more they opposed Cortés, the more this increased his desire to see Moteuczoma, who was such a great king in that land, and to discover in its entirety the wealth that he imagined existed there. As soon as Cortés received the gift and [Moteuczoma's] answer, he gave Teudilli a whole outfit of his own and many other things from among the best that he carried for bartering to take to Lord Moteuczoma, whose liberality and magnificence the governor had so greatly praised. Cortés told him that, even if only to see such a good and mighty king, it was right to go. Moreover, he was under the obligation to carry out the commission that had been assigned to him by the emperor of Christianity, who was the mightiest king in the world. He added that if he did not go, he would not be doing his job or carrying out his mandate under the laws of Goodness and Chivalry, and would thus incur the king and his lord's disfavor and wrath. Therefore he urged [Teudilli] strongly to reconsider his decision so that Moteuczoma would know that he could not make

[Cortés] change his mind because of the obstacles they presented to him or because of much greater ones that might occur. He was saying, in other words, that he who had traveled two thousand leagues across the sea could well cross seventy by land.

He importuned the governor to send the message quickly so that the messenger would return promptly, for he realized that he had many people to sustain and little to feed them, and the ships were in danger while they spent their time in talks. Teudilli said that he was already sending daily dispatches to Moteuczoma with everything that came up and told him not to worry meanwhile, but to rest and enjoy himself. The message and response **from Moteuczoma** would arrive any time soon from Mexico, despite the distance. As to the provisions, he told him not to worry about them, since they would supply him abundantly. After this, the governor implored Cortés to accompany him six or seven leagues from there, for he was poorly lodged in the field and sand dunes. Since Cortés refused to go, he left alone and stayed there for ten days waiting to receive Moteuczoma's orders.

Chapter 29. How Cortés Learned that There Were Factions **Among the Natives** in Those Lands

During this time, some men climbed one of the many small hills or sand dunes that abound there. Since they did not join or speak to those who were serving the Spaniards, Cortés asked about the people who refused to come to where he and the Spaniards were. Those two captains told him that they were some farmers who stopped to watch. Dissatisfied with the answer, Cortés suspected (f. 21v) that they were lying to him, for he had the impression that they wished to approach the Spaniards but did not dare to because of the governor's people. And he was right, for everybody wanted to see them and to speak with them, because the news of the wonders our people had accomplished at Potonchan had spread throughout the coast and even inland toward Mexico. However, they did not dare for fear of the Colhuaque,[108] who are Moteuczoma's people. So Cortés sent five Spaniards to call them through peace signs or to take one by force and bring him to camp.

108. [LdeG: Culua]. This is a rather vague reference. Most specifically, it refers to the peoples who inhabited the altepetl of Colhuacan, located just south of Mexico Tenochtitlan, and, generally, one of numerous groups subject to Moteuczoma and the Mexica Tenochca. In this instance, and subsequently, the reference is surely to the Acolhuaque, the peoples associated with the altepetl of Tetzcoco who were also a part of the Triple Alliance.

Those people, who were close to twenty, were glad to see the five foreigners come toward them, and wishing to observe such new and strange people and ships, they most readily came to the camp and the captain's tent. These Indians were very different from those they had seen thus far. They were taller and had the cartilage between their nostrils slit to such an extent that it almost reached their mouths, where they inserted rings made from jet, amber, or other prized items. They had their lower lips pierced and in the holes they placed large golden rings with many coarse turquoises. However, the rings weighed so much that they brought the lips down to the chin and left the teeth exposed. Though they meant to convey elegance and beauty, it made them look very homely in the eyes of our Spaniards, who had never seen such ugliness. Although Moteuczoma's people also had their lips and ears pierced, they had small holes and wore small rings. Some [of the new arrivals] did not have their noses slit but had large holes. But all had such large holes in their ears that any finger of the hand could very well pass through them. There they fastened gold pendants and stones. This ugly and singular appearance caused amazement among our people.

Cortés spoke with them through Marina **Tenepal**,[109] and they said they were from Cempoala,[110] a city as far away as one sun **(**this is how they measure their journeys**)**; and that the boundaries of their land were halfway from there in a great river that marked the boundary with the lands of the lord Moteuczomatzin.[111] They added that their cacique had sent them to find out what people or gods came in those *teocalli*[112]

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109. Here, C. furnishes a unique example of Malintzin with a second name, which linguist Frances Karttunen states was not a surname but a term meaning "translator." Karttunen, "Rethinking Malinche," in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, eds. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman, 1997), 290–312. Nevertheless, in LdeG, the Spanish terms *faraúte*, *lengua*, and *intérprete* (not Nahuatl *tenepal*) are consistently used to describe both Aguilar's and Malintzin's translating roles. Without fail, C. uses *nahuatlatoque* for "interpreters" in his Nahuatl accounts. See Günter Zimmermann, *Die Relationen Chimalpahin's zur Geschichte México's, Teil 1: Die zeit bis zur Conquista, 1521* (Hamburg, 1963), 143: "*quihtoque yn nahuatlahtoque Jeronimo de Agular yhuan Malintzin*." Tenepal is used as a second name for Malintzin at least six times in this manuscript. We have come upon only one other reference to this name in the literature, and that is in a note added by don José Fernando Ramírez, whose comments were included in Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala*, 2d. ed., ed. Alfredo Chavero (México, 1947), 191: "llamábase Malinalli Tepenal [*sic*]."

110. Also called Cempoallan. Gerhard, *Guide*, 363, states that Cempoala was the largest and most important polity in the Totonac state, yet with Mexica garrisons in its vicinity and subject to Mexico Tenochtitlan.

111. The Nahuatl suffix *-tzin* is added to Moteuczoma's name. Honorific usage is also discussed in Chapter 68.

112. Nahuatl: *teocalli*, "god-house" or "temple."

(which is to say temples**)**, and that they had not dared to come on their own earlier as they did not know whom to approach. Because he thought them savages, Cortés welcomed and treated them in a flattering manner. He demonstrated that he was very happy to see them and to hear of their lord's good will. He gave them some barter goods to take with them and showed them the weapons and horses, things they had never before seen or heard about. Thus, they wandered through the camp like fools looking at one thing or another. At no point did they or the other Indians address or communicate with each other.

When asked, the Indian **Malintzin Tenepal**, who served as translator, told Cortés that not only was their language different but that they were the subjects of another lord who was subject only to Moteuczoma in part and by force. Cortés was very pleased with the news, since he already speculated from his talk with Teudilli that Moteuczoma had made (f. 22) war and created enemies there. So he soon brought three or four **of them** separately to his tent, those who seemed to him to be the most informed or most important, and asked them through Marina **Tenepal** about the lords of that land. They replied that it all belonged to the great lord Moteuczoma, although each province or city had a lord of its own. Nevertheless, they all paid tribute to him and served him as vassals and even as slaves. They had recently been forced to pay homage and tribute to him, as in the case with [the lord] of Cempoala and with some of their neighbors. They were always involved in wars against [Moteuczoma] in order to free themselves from his tyranny, but they were unable to do so since his forces were large and composed of very brave people.

Cortés was happy to find that the lords of that land were enemies and at war, so he could carry out his purpose and plans. He thanked them for the information on the nature and condition of the land. Offering his friendship and help, he begged them to come many more times to his camp and sent them off with many commissions and gifts for their lord, asking them to tell their lord that he soon would go to see and serve him.

Chapter 30. How Cortés Explored the Land with Four Hundred Companions

Teudilli returned after ten days with abundant cotton clothing and well-crafted items with feathers in exchange for what [Cortés] had sent to Mexico. He told Cortés to leave along with his fleet because at the moment it was not necessary to meet with Moteuczoma. He also told him to see what he wanted from the land, and he would give it to him, and that every time he stopped there, he would do the same. Cortés responded

that he would do no such thing and that he would not leave without speaking with the great Moteuczoma. The governor told him not to insist further in this matter and after saying so, he took his leave.

Later that night he departed with all his Indians, male and female, who served and provided for the camp. At dawn their huts were empty. Cortés became suspicious and prepared for battle. However, since they did not appear he looked for a harbor for his ships and a good site to settle. His intention was to remain there and conquer the land since he had seen great evidence of gold, silver, and other riches. But he did not find a site within one league or so. All was sand dunes that over time shifted from one place to another, and with the land damp and subject to flooding it made a poor dwelling place. For this reason Cortés sent Francisco de Montejo in two brigantines along with fifty companions and Antonio de Alaminos, the pilot, to explore the coast in order to find a suitable harbor and site.

Montejo reconnoitered the coast until he reached Pánuco without finding a port, except for a rock shelter that projected out into the sea. He returned after having covered a short distance, as he spent three weeks fleeing from the rough seas he encountered. They had run into such terrible currents that despite making their way with both sails and oars the brigantines were forced backward. However, he told Cortés how the people from the coast came out, bled themselves, and offered (f. 22v) their blood smeared on straw to the Spaniards either as a friendly or worshipful gesture. Cortés very much regretted Montejo's poor report, but still determined to make shelter where Montejo had told him. [The site] was close to two rivers good for water and trading, with dense woods for firewood and timber. It had many stones for building, many pastures, and flat lands for tillage. However, for a settlement, it was not a good port at which to establish a trading post and docking ships, since it was too open and exposed to the north winds that blow there the most and cause the greatest damage.

After Teudilli and the rest of Moteuczoma's people left, [Cortés] was at a loss, for he did not want to run out of provisions or have the ships wrecked. So he had all his clothing brought on board the ship, and with up to four hundred people and all the horses, he followed the route taken by those who had served them. After traveling for three leagues he arrived at a large river, though it was not very deep since they were able to wade across it. Soon after crossing the river he encountered a hamlet whose people had deserted it for fear of his arrival. He entered a big house that must have belonged to the lord. It was made of adobe and timber; its floors raised by hand more than one estado above the ground. The roof was covered with straw, but underneath it had been worked in a

beautiful and unusual way. It had many large rooms, some filled with jars of honey, centli, **which is an ear of maize**, beans, and other grains that they eat and keep for their year-round supply. Others were filled with cotton clothing and featherwork fashioned with gold and silver. Similar items, made of the same materials, were found in the other houses.

Cortés ordered by public proclamation that with the exception of the provisions no one touch anything there, under penalty of death. He did this in order to gain a good reputation and the favor of the people of this land. There was in that hamlet a temple that looked like a house because of its rooms. It had a small compact tower with a room on top resembling a chapel to which they climbed twenty steps, where there were some idol effigies. There they found much paper smeared with blood and much more blood from sacrificed men, according to Marina **Tenepal**. They also found the stone where they placed those whom they sacrificed and the flint knives used to open their chests and pull out their beating hearts, which they cast up to the heavens as an offering. They smeared their idols with the blood and the paper that they burned and offered to their gods. This sight elicited great compassion and even fright from our Spaniards. From the hamlet he went to three or four others, none of them having more than two hundred houses. He found all of them deserted, although full of provisions and blood, as was the first. He turned back, having accomplished nothing. It was time to unload his vessels and send for more people, since he wanted to settle at once. He spent ten days doing so.

Chapter 31. How Cortés Resigned His Command

(f. 23) When Cortés returned with the rest of the Spaniards to the ships, he gathered them all together and stated that they could see what grace God had granted them in guiding and bringing them safe and sound to such a good, wealthy land, according to the signs and appearance that they had observed in so short a time. The land had an abundance of food and was inhabited by people who were better clothed, more refined and rational, and had better buildings and farms than any of the people they had so far encountered in the Indies. He added there was more still to be seen than what appeared. Therefore they should give many thanks to God, enter the land, settle there, and enjoy the grace and gifts of the Lord.

In order to settle successfully, his idea was to stay there for the present, or in the best place and harbor they could find. They would fortify the site with a wall and fortress to defend themselves from the peoples of the land who were not pleased with their coming and abiding there. Moreover, they could more easily become friends and trade with some

Indians and neighboring towns, such as Cempoala, and with other towns that were enemies of Moteuczoma's peoples. After settling and populating, they could unload the ships and send them to Cuba, Santo Domingo, Jamaica, Borinquen,[113] and other islands, or to Spain for more people, arms, and horses as well as for more clothing and food supplies. Besides, it suited them to give an account of what was happening to the emperor and king, their lord, in Spain, along with the samples of gold, silver, and beautiful pieces of featherwork they had obtained. To carry this out with greater authority and counsel, he wanted, as their captain, to appoint a cabildo, select *alcaldes*, "magistrates," and *regidores*, "councilmen," and designate all other officers necessary for the rule and good government of the *villa*, "municipal corporation," they were about to found. They were to command, govern, and impose bans until the emperor decreed and ordered what was most suitable to his service.

Afterward, Cortés took possession of all future discoveries in the name of Emperor don Carlos V, king of Castile. He carried out the attestations and formalities requisite to the situation, asking Francisco Fernández, the royal escribano who was present, to bear witness. All answered that they agreed with what he said, and they praised and approved what **Cortés** proposed. Therefore, he should do as he wished, since they had come with him to (f. 23v) follow and obey him. Cortés then duly appointed alcaldes, regidores, a *procurador*, "solicitor," an alguacil, an escribano, and all other officials to form an entire cabildo in the name of the emperor, their natural lord. He gave them the staffs of office and named the council "Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz," since they had entered that land on Friday, Day of the Cross [May 3]. After these attestations, Cortés made another before the same notary and the new alcaldes, who were Alonso Hernández de Portocarrero and Francisco de Montejo, in which he gave up, desisted, and relinquished into their hands and power as royal and ordinary justices the command and title of captain general and discoverer granted to him by the Hieronymite friars who resided in and governed Hispaniola.[114] [LdeG: Cortés did not wish to make use of the power given him by Diego Velázquez, lieutenant governor of Cuba, by order of the Admiral of the Indies, to rescue and discover while searching for Juan de Grijalva, since none had command or jurisdiction over the land that he and they had recently discovered and begun to settle in the name of the king of Castile, as his natural and loyal vassals. He thus required that this be set down in writing, and they agreed.

113. Later, this island came to be known as Puerto Rico.

114. Two pages are missing in C.'s manuscript copy. For continuity, we include the missing text from LdeG's book (1552, ff. xix–xx) in English translation within brackets.

[Chapter 32]. How the Soldiers Made Cortés Captain and *Alcalde Mayor*[115]

The new alcaldes and officials took possession of their staffs and posts and then met in council as is commonly done in the villas and towns of Castile. There they discussed many things regarding the commonwealth of the republic and the administration of the new villa they had established. Together they agreed to name the very same Hernando Cortés as their captain and *justicia mayor*, "chief justice," and to give him the power and authority to deal with war and conquest until the emperor [Charles V] mandated otherwise.

Thus the next day, fully in agreement, will, and resolve, the entire government and council went to Cortés to tell him that until the emperor ordered or decreed differently, they needed a *caudillo*, "leader," for the war effort, who would continue the conquest and exploration of the land. He was to be the captain, leader, and justicia mayor to whom they could resort in arduous and difficult circumstances and for any discrepancies that might arise. As this charge was needed and required for both town and army, they begged him to accept. Because of his knowledge and experience and from what they knew of him before and after his journey and command of the fleet, he was more qualified than anyone to govern and rule over them. They therefore requested and even demanded it of him, because they truly believed that God and the king would be well served if he accepted the charge. They, on their part, would be most grateful, pleased, and satisfied to be ruled with justice, treated with humility, and led with diligence and effort. For this reason, all chose him, naming him their captain general and justicia mayor, giving him all the requisite authority, and submitting themselves under his rule, jurisdiction, and protection. Cortés did not need much entreating to accept the charge, since he wished for nothing else at the time.

After he was elected captain, the cabildo stated that [Cortés] was aware that, until they settled and were known in the land, they had nothing to sustain them other than the provisions that he had brought in the ships. He should take for himself and his servants what he needed and assess the rest at a fair price. [The cabildo] asked him to turn over the provisions and divide them among everyone, as they would all be sure to pay for these goods or else have them deducted from the lot, after subtracting the royal fifth. The cabildo also asked [Cortés] to appraise the ships with their artillery at a reasonable amount, so they could be

115. In this instance, *alcalde mayor* and *justicia mayor* refer to the same office, although alcalde mayor is commonly defined as "chief magistrate."

purchased collectively to transport bread, wine, clothing, arms, horses, and the other necessities for the army and the town from the islands, which would be cheaper than having them brought over by merchants, who always demand high prices. If Cortés agreed, he would make them very happy and perform a good deed. Cortés answered that when he had gathered provisions in Cuba to furnish the fleet, he had not done so for resale to them, as others did, but to give freely, although he had used up his capital and gone into debt. Therefore, they should take everything, and he would order the escribanos and shipmasters to bring all their provisions to the councilmen at the cabildo to divide and ration equally by headcount, including [to] him, without privileging anyone. In these times, and with only enough food to sustain life, the rank-and-file need as much as the commanders and the elderly as much as the young. And so, despite owing more than 7,000 ducats, he gave the provisions to [the men] at no cost. And as to the ships, Cortés stated that he would do what was most convenient for all and would not dispose of anything without first letting them know. Cortés did all of this in order to win their support and good opinion, as there were many who did not wish him well, although in truth, he was always liberal with his companions in covering the costs of war.

[Chapter 33]. The Reception Given Cortés in Cempoala

Thinking this was not a good place to found the town, they agreed to move to Aquiahuiztlan,[116] which was sheltered by the crag mentioned by Montejo. So Cortés ordered the artillery and all else on land placed on board the ships, along with the people to guard them, and had them sail to that spot. Meanwhile, he went by land the eight or ten leagues' distance with the horses, four hundred companions, two half falconets, and some Indians from Cuba. As the ships sailed along the coast, he headed toward where he had been told Cempoala was, straight toward where the sun set, although he had to detour somewhat to reach the crag. After covering three leagues, he reached the river that bordered the lands of][117] Moteuczoma. Not finding a passage, he entered the sea to wade across the breakers at the mouth of the river, and even there he had difficulty crossing, having to both walk and swim. After crossing, they followed

116. Quiahuahuiztlan (and hereinafter), which Gerhard, *Guide*, 363–64, describes as "a hilltop fortress." It was up the coast from Cempoala. Both Gerhard and Thomas, *Conquest*, 204, 208, state that it was the indigenous site of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, the first official, permanent Spanish settlement in North America.

117. This marks the return to the Chimalpahin manuscript.

the bank upstream since they could not find the shore because it was flooded. They found fishermen's dwellings, humble huts, and some small sections of farm land. After one league and a half they left the lagoons and entered some very good and extensive lowlands where there were many deer.

Pressing ahead with their march along the river and hoping to find some good towns along its bank, they saw up to twenty people on a small hill. Cortés then sent four men on horseback and ordered that if, after their peace signs, the Indians fled, the horsemen were to chase and capture as many as they could. They needed them as translators and guides for their journey and to locate the towns, since now they were advancing blindly without knowing how to reach a town. The horsemen left, going toward a small hill, calling to them, and signaling that they came in peace. But the men fled, fearful and terrified to see such large and tall creatures which looked to them like monsters and as if man and horse were both one being. The men on horseback soon caught up with them, since the land was flat and without trees. Not carrying any arms, they surrendered and all were brought to Cortés.

Their ears, noses, and faces had large and ugly perforations and earrings like the men who had said they were from Cempoala, and they also said this and that [Cempoala] was nearby. When asked, "Why did you come?" they answered that they came to observe. And, "Why did you flee?" they answered that it was because they feared strangers. Then Cortés reassured them and said that he came with those few companions to their town to see and talk to their lord as a friend, having a strong desire to meet him. He asked them to guide him, since [their] lord did not want to come or leave the town. The Indians told him that it was too late to reach Cempoala, but that they would take him to a hamlet located on the other side of the river, which they could see and where—though it was a small place—(f. 24) he would have good lodging and food for all his company that night. Once they arrived there, some of the twenty Indians then left with Cortés's permission to tell their lord that the Spaniards were staying in the hamlet. They were to come back the next day with a reply. The rest remained to serve and supply the Spaniards, their new guests, and they lodged and fed them well. That night Cortés made certain to take as good and safe a shelter as possible.

The following morning up to one hundred men all loaded with hens[118] as big as turkeys came very early and told [Cortés] that their lord was happy about his coming and was waiting for him in the city. [LdeG: He

118. These were probably turkey hens, or other fowl, as there were no domesticated chickens in North America.

did not come to Cortés because, as he was very fat and heavy, he had trouble walking.] Cortés and his **companions** [LdeG: Spaniards] ate the birds for lunch. He followed the guide quickly in formation, carrying two small cannons ready to fire in case something occurred. They traveled along a very pleasant road from the point where they had crossed the river to another one. They forded the river and soon saw Cempoala, about a mile away, filled with gardens, foliage, and naturally irrigated orchards. Many men and women came from the city to receive the strange, extraordinary men. They joyously gave them many flower **bouquets** and fruits that were very different from those that our men knew. They even moved without fear into the center of the squadron. To cheers and cries of celebration, the Spaniards entered the city, which resembled a bower with large, tall trees almost concealing the houses. Many nobles approached the city entrance, in the manner of a cabildo, to welcome, speak, and place themselves at his disposal. Cortés's Spanish horsemen, who had scouted far ahead, came back astonished, just as the squadron was entering the city. They told Cortés that they had seen the courtyard of a large house all covered with silver. He ordered them to return and not act surprised or amazed at this or anything else they should see.

The entire street they traveled on filled with people who marveled at the horses, pieces of artillery, and strange men. Passing through a very large square, they saw to the right a large stone and mortar wall with parapets completely white-washed with gypsum and very well polished, glittering in the sun like silver. This is what the Spaniards took to be the silver-plated walls. **(**I believe that with their imagination and good wishes everything that glittered seemed like silver and gold to them. In truth, the image resulted in only an illusion, devoid of the substance they desired.**)** Inside the courtyard or enclosure there was an ample row of chambers and on the other side six or seven towers separated from each other, with one much higher than the rest. The Spaniards passed by silently, feigning innocence, although they had deceived themselves [about the silver in the walls]. They asked nothing as they followed the guides to the houses and palace of the lord.

[The lord] then appeared very well accompanied by elders, better dressed than the others. At his side were two (f. 24v) nobles,[119] judging by their attire and the way they led him by the arm. When the lord and Cortés met, each bowed and saluted the other according to the custom of their countries, and with the help of the interpreters they greeted each other briefly. The lord then returned to the palace and designated some of

119. LdeG uses *caballero*, "horseman," "knight," or "gentleman," which for obvious reasons has no parallel in Nahuatl. *Pilli*, "noble," is likely the closest equivalent.

his nobles to lodge and accompany the captain and his people. They took Cortés to the enclosed courtyard on the square where there was enough room for all the Spaniards, since its spacious chambers were good and comfortable. Once inside, those who thought the walls were covered with silver realized their mistake and were ashamed. Cortés had the rooms assigned to his men, the horses cared for, and the artillery placed at the door—in brief, he took over as if he were in his own camp in the midst of his enemies. He ordered, under penalty of death, that nobody should leave without his express permission no matter what the need. The lord's servants and town officers provided an abundance of supper and beds according to their custom.

[Chapter 34]. What the Lord of Cempoala Said to Cortés

The next morning the lord, accompanied by high-ranking men, came to see Cortés. He brought many cotton mantas for him, which they wear knotted at the shoulder like those worn by Gypsy women to cover themselves. He also brought some gold jewels, possibly worth 2,000 ducats. He told Cortés to rest and enjoy himself along with his men, as he did not wish to trouble him or discuss business. He thus took his leave as before, saying that they could ask for anything they needed or desired. When he left, a group of Indians, more numerous than the Spaniards, brought much cooked food, fruit, and bouquets of flowers. This abundance allowed the Spaniards to remain for fifteen days. The next day, Cortés sent the lord some clothing and garments from Spain along with many barter goods. He asked permission to visit and speak with him at his house, since it would be impolite not to reciprocate the lord's visit. The lord replied that he would be pleased and happy to see him.

Cortés took as many as fifty armed Spaniards with him. Positioning the rest in the courtyard and chamber with a captain on alert, he left for the palace. The lord met him on the street, and they entered a room with a low ceiling. **(**Since it is hot there, they do not elevate their buildings but for cleanliness they raise the foundations with landfill about an estado which they ascend by steps. The houses are built on top of the foundation with walls of stone or adobe and finished with lime or gypsum. The roof is made of straw or leaves, also uniquely and beautifully fashioned, and protects from the rain as if of tile.**)** Cortés and the lord sat on stools like tooled blocks, all in one piece, legs and all. Ordering his people to disperse or leave, the lord and Cortés started to talk about their affairs (f. 25) through their interpreters, spending much time on questions and answers. Just as Cortés wished to be well informed about the

things of that land and of the great king Moteuczoma, the lord was not at all dumb **(**although he was fat**)** in demanding and asking questions.

In brief, Cortés explained his arrival, on whose behalf he came, and for what purpose he was sent. It was similar to what he had told the lord **called** Teudilli and others in Tabasco. After listening attentively to Cortés, the cacique began a long tale of how his ancestors had lived in great peace, tranquility, and liberty. But for some years his people and land had been subjected to tyranny and ruin, because the lords of Mexico Tenochtitlan with their people of Colhua had usurped by force of arms not only the city but the entire land with no one able to obstruct or impede them. Their first appeal was mainly through their religion, but they followed with warfare, and before anyone realized it, they had taken over.

Having fallen in such an error, the Cempoalteca were unable to prevail against them to remove the yoke of servitude and tyranny, despite their attempts to fight back. [LdeG: In fact, the more they resisted, the greater the retribution.] The Mexica receive and protect as friends and allies those who place themselves in their hands and submit to them by paying tribute and tax or by recognizing them as their lords through homage. However, if they resist, rise up in arms against them, or rebel after becoming their subjects, the Mexica punish them terribly. They kill many and eat them after sacrificing them to their gods of war, Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli, and take the rest as slaves. Fathers, sons, and women are forced to work from sunrise to sunset, and everything they possess is taken from them. In addition to the insults and mistreatment, the Mexica send constables and tax collectors to their houses to take what they find, without mercy or compassion, leaving them to die from starvation.

Therefore, in being treated in this way by Moteuczoma **(**the cacique said**)**, who today rules in Mexico, who would not be glad to be a vassal or even more, a friend, of such a good and just prince like they say the emperor is? If only to be free from everyday vexations, thefts, affronts, and violence, even without receiving or enjoying other favors and benefits that the great lord can and does give? He paused here, his eyes and heart overcome by emotion. On regaining his composure, he commended Mexico's strength and its location on water, and exalted Moteuczoma's riches, court, greatness, army, and might. He stated that Tlaxcala,[120]

120. Gerhard, *Guide*, 324, describes Tlaxcala as "cold, bleak," yet a densely populated polity made up mostly of Nahuatl speakers. It was divided into four somewhat autonomous yet confederated states. For years, the Mexica had been going to war against the Tlaxcalteca, who held out but suffered great hardship due to a lack of cotton and salt and doubtless other commodities as a result of their being marginalized or excluded from imperial trade networks.

Huexotzinco,[121] other provinces near there, and the people in the Totonac mountain range, opposed **Moteuczoma and** the Mexica[122] and already knew what had happened in Tabasco. He offered, if Cortés so desired, to form (f. 25v) a league with them all so Moteuczoma could not prevail against them.

Cortés was very glad to hear all of it, as it suited him well. He said he was sorry about the despicable treatment that the lord and his subjects received in their land, and he could be certain that Cortés would rid him of those evils and avenge him, because he had come to right wrongs and free the subjugated, help the weak, and eliminate tyrannies. Besides, the lord and his people had received them in their homes so warmly and willingly that [Cortés] was obligated to grant him every pleasure and support him against his enemies. Cortés offered to do the same for his friends, telling [the Lord of Cempoala] to let them know his mission. Because they were on his side, he would be their friend and help meet all their requests.

Afterward, Cortés took his leave, saying that he had spent many days there and needed to visit the people and ships waiting for him in Quia[hua]huiztlan where he intended to stay for some time and where he could be reached. The lord of Cempoala responded that [Cortés] was welcome to stay if he wished, but if not, the ships were sufficiently close to continue to confer without effort or time. He called for eight maidens who were very well dressed in their style, resembling *moriscas*.[123] One of them wore finer, more elaborately embroidered cotton garments, some gold pieces, and jewels. The lord said that all the women were rich and noble but the one wearing gold was his niece and ruled over vassals. He gave her to Cortés **(**along with the rest**)** to take as his wife and distribute the others among the gentlemen of his company. He did so as a token of his love and true and perpetual friendship. So as not to offend the giver, Cortés received the gift with much joy. He then departed with the women in litters carried by men. There were many other women who served them and many other Indians who accompanied him, guiding him to the sea and providing him with what he needed.

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121. Ibid., 141. Huexotzinco was located on the eastern side of Mt. Iztaccihuatl on a plain that was part of the Atoyac valley. It was inhabited by Nahuatl speakers and was allied with Tlaxcala as well as other large polities in the same general area.

122. LdeG often uses *Mexicanos*, the Spanish form for the plural *Mexica*.

123. In Spain, *morisco/a* most typically described a convert to Christianity from Islam; in the Americas, a *morisca* was the daughter of a European and a mulatta. For an illustration and discussion, see Kenneth Mills and William B. Taylor, eds., *Colonial Spanish America: A Documentary History* (Wilmington, 1998), 76, 179–80.

[Chapter 35]. What Occurred **or Happened** to Cortés at the Port of Quiahuahuiztlan, **and Other Remarkable Events**

Having reached **Quiahuahuiztlan** the same day they left Cempoala, Cortés was greatly surprised that the ships, which had not yet arrived, were taking such a long time for so short a journey. With nothing to do, he went with his men in formation and the people of Cempoala to a place the distance of a harquebus shot or a little farther than the rock on an incline called Quiahuahuiztlan. They told him that the place was held by one of the lords subjugated by Moteuczoma. He arrived at the foot of the hill without seeing a single man from the town, save for two men whom Marina could not understand. As they started to ascend the slope, the horsemen wished to dismount because the incline was too steep and rugged. But Cortés forbade them so the Indians would not believe there were places too high or difficult for the horses to negotiate. They climbed slowly until they reached the houses.

Not seeing anyone, they feared some kind of ambush. So as not to show weakness, they proceeded through the town until they came upon a dozen (f. 26) high-ranking men with an interpreter who knew both the Colhua language and the one known there **(**which is spoken throughout the mountain range**)** called Totonac. They said they had never seen people who looked like the Spaniards, nor ever heard that they had come to those parts; it was for this reason they had hidden. But since the lord of Cempoala had told them who they were, describing them as good, harmless, and peaceful people, they felt reassured and lost their fear when they saw them coming toward their town. They therefore welcomed them on behalf of their lord and led them to lodgings. Cortés followed them to a square where the lord of the place appeared, surrounded by many of his men.

He showed great pleasure in seeing the foreigners with such long beards. He brought in a clay brazier with coals, sprinkling them with a whitish resin smelling of incense. Then he greeted Cortés, wafting him with incense, a ceremony they observe with their lords and gods. Cortés and the lord sat under an arcade in the square while his people were being housed. Cortés explained the reason for his coming to that land, as he had done everywhere else he had set foot. The lord repeated almost the very same words as the lord of Cempoala, even to fearing Moteuczoma's wrath for having received and lodged Cortés without his license and permission.

While they were speaking, twenty men appeared on the opposite side of the square, like alguaciles, holding short, thick staffs in their hands as well as large feather fans. The lord and his people trembled at the sight. When Cortés asked, "Why?" they told him that they were Moteuczoma's

tax collectors. They feared that the tax collectors would inform Moteuczoma of the Spaniards' presence and that they would be punished and mistreated as a result. Cortés calmed their fears, saying that Moteuczoma was his friend and that he would persuade him not to rebuke or punish them; that [Moteuczoma] would be glad they had received him in his land. If not, [Cortés] would defend them because one of his men could fight against one thousand from Mexico, as Moteuczoma himself already well knew from their battle at Potonchan. The lord and his people were not at all reassured by what Cortés said. Rather they hurried to receive and lodge the tax collectors, so great was their fear of Moteuczoma. Cortés stopped the lord, telling him, "So that you may see what my people and I can do, command your people to arrest and jail the tax collectors from Mexico. I shall be here with you, and Moteuczoma will be unable and unwilling to harm you out of respect for me."

Encouraged by these words, the lord had the Mexica arrested. When they resisted, they gave them a good beating and imprisoned them in separate stocks, which are long poles where they tie the feet at one end, the neck at the other, and the hands in the middle, forcing them to lie on the ground. After securing them, they asked whether to kill them. Cortés (f. 26v) requested that they not be killed but kept secure so they would not escape. They brought them into one of the chambers where our people were lodged and placed them around a great fire they lit in the center, under the watch of many guards. After assigning some Spaniards as watchmen at the chamber door, Cortés left to have supper in his lodging, where he had stored the abundant provisions that the lord had sent him and his men.

[Chapter 36]. The Messages that Cortés Sent to **King** Moteuczoma

When [Cortés] thought the Indians were sound asleep, since it was very late at night, he sent a message to the Spaniards guarding the prisoners to secretly release two and bring them to him. Without being observed, the Spaniards contrived a way to cut the cords made from some kind of rush; they released and brought the two to Cortés's chamber where he waited. Acting as though he did not know them, he asked them through Aguilar and Marina, "Who are you and why are you imprisoned?"

They answered that they were Moteuczoma's vassals and were in charge of collecting certain tributes that the people of the town and province paid to their lord. They added that they did not know why they had been arrested and mistreated. Rather they were astonished to see such unprecedented folly, since in the past they were greeted on their approach

with no little reverence and provided with every service and pleasure. However, they believed that the mountain people had dared to do this because Cortés and his companions, who were thought to be immortal, were present. They even feared that those who remained imprisoned would be killed before Moteuczoma found out, for the mountain people were barbarians, and if given the opportunity they would gladly rebel against Moteuczoma to anger him and make him pay as they had in the past. Therefore they begged Cortés to follow them and take care that their companions did not die or remain in the hands of their enemies, for Lord Moteuczoma would be very aggrieved if his loyal and honorable attendants suffered evil for serving him well.

Cortés told them that he was sorry that Lord Moteuczoma had been affronted under his watch as he was [Moteuczoma's] friend, and his servants were not to be mistreated. He would take care of them along with his own, but they should thank God in heaven for having freed them under Moteuczoma's favor and friendship, so that Cortés could dispatch them to Mexico with a message. For this reason, they should eat and rely on their fleet-footedness to avoid being caught, which would be worse than before. They ate but could hardly wait to leave. Cortés wished them well and had them leave town following their usual route. He provided them with food and bid them to remember the freedom and good deed he had granted them and to tell their lord Moteuczoma that he considered him a friend and wished to offer him every service on hearing of his fame, goodness, and might. He was glad to be there at such a time to show his good will toward him by liberating [Moteuczoma's servants] and striving to protect and preserve the honor and authority (f. 27) of so great a prince by favoring and protecting his people and by looking after his charges as if they were his own.

Although his Highness [Moteuczoma] did not reject [Cortés's] friendship, nor that of the Spaniards, as Teudilli, **governor of Cuetlaxtlan**, had done, leaving [Cortés] without saying goodbye and removing the people of the coast from his lands, [Cortés] would continue to serve him whenever possible and seek by all possible means his grace, favor, and friendship. He truly believed, for there was no reason not to, that these were all good deeds and show of love between them. He did not think that his Highness had fled and rejected their friendship, or that he had ordered his people not to see or speak to him or provide monies for what [the Spaniards] needed to survive. Rather, [Moteuczoma's] vassals, believing they were serving him, in attempting to do right instead did wrong. They did not understand that God visited them through the servants of the emperor in Spain from whom Moteuczoma and they all could receive great benefits and learn of the mysteries and very holy things.

If this [benefit] did not materialize, Moteuczoma would be to blame. However, Cortés had such faith in his prudence that he would be very pleased to speak with him as a friend and brother of the king of Spain, in whose most glorious name Cortés and his other companions had come. As to the servants who remained imprisoned, he would see to it that they were not harmed. In service to Moteuczoma, he promised to deliver and liberate them promptly, as he had done with the two men dispatched with the message. But he did not want to upset the townspeople, his hosts, who had been very courteous and treated him very well. He did not wish to seem ungrateful or repay them poorly by challenging them in their home. The Mexica left happily, promising to comply faithfully with his request.

[Chapter 37] The Rebellion and Alliance Against Moteuczoma Plotted by Cortés

When the prisoners' absence was noticed next day at dawn, the lord reprimanded the guards, intending to kill the other prisoners. However, at the uproar and because he was waiting to see the townspeople's reaction, Cortés came out and implored them not to kill [the prisoners]. As public servants, they had obeyed their lord and according to natural law did not deserve to be punished. They were not at fault for their action in the service to their king. He asked for custody of the prisoners so they would not escape as the others had done, although he would take the blame if they did. [The guards] released them to Cortés, who sent them to the ships under threat, ordering his men to shackle them.

The terrified natives assembled with their lord to deliberate on what they should do, since it was certain that the runaways would relate in Mexico the affront and mistreatment done to them. Some said that it was right and requisite for all to send with their ambassadors their tribute and other gifts to Moteuczoma in order to appease his wrath. They wished to apologize by blaming the Spaniards, who ordered them imprisoned, and to beg his forgiveness (f. 27v) for the error and oversight they had committed as mad and insolent men against the majesty of the Mexica. Others argued that it would be much better to cast off the yoke of slavery and no longer acknowledge the people of Mexico, who were evil tyrants, now that they had on their side the godlike and invincible Spanish men on horseback and would have many other neighbors to help them. They finally resolved to rebel, to not miss the opportunity, and implored Cortés to support their decision as their captain and defender, since it was because of him that they had agreed to this. Whether or not

Moteuczoma sent an army against them, they were determined to break with him and make war against him.

God knew how pleased Cortés was with this outcome, since he thought that in this way he would accomplish his goals. He cautioned them to consider their actions carefully, as he understood Moteuczoma to be an extremely powerful king. However, he would safely lead and defend them, if they wished, since he preferred their friendship to that of Moteuczoma, who disdained him. Yet, he wanted to know, how many people could they gather? They responded that by means of an alliance they could assemble one hundred thousand men. Cortés then told them to quickly alert those on their side who were enemies of Moteuczoma, assuring them that they would receive help from the Spaniards. He did not need them or their army, since he alone with his men could take on all the men from Colhua, and even more. He wanted them to be prepared and on alert in case Moteuczoma sent his army to the lands of the alliance to take them by surprise, so that [Cortés] would have sufficient time to send some of his people to defend them, if they needed help.

With Cortés's encouragement, and as they themselves were proud and impulsive, they soon dispatched their messengers to all the towns they chose to notify of their plan, praising the Spaniards to the heavens. Through these means and requests, many towns and lords and the entire mountain range rebelled, proclaiming open war against Moteuczoma and routing all the tax collectors from Mexico. Cortés wanted to rile the people in order to gain their support and even their lands, seeing that he would have no other opportunity. He had the tax collectors imprisoned and then freed them to curry favor with Moteuczoma. He stirred up the town and province, offering to defend them, and left them in such a state of rebellion that they would be dependent on him.

[Chapter 38]. The Founding of Villa Rica de la Veracruz

The ships had already moved behind the crag when Cortés went to meet them, bringing many Indians from the rebel town and others nearby, as well as those from Cempoala which he had with him. He had them cut many branches and much timber, which they carried along with stones to build houses at the site he had plotted. He called the place "Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz," as they had agreed upon earlier when electing the cabildo at (f. 28) San Juan de Ulúa. They distributed the lots among the residents and the officials, designating the areas for the church, main square, buildings for the cabildo, jail, warehouses, wharf, slaughterhouse, and other public places necessary for the villa's good government. A fortress

was also laid out above the port at a suitable location. They built the fortress and the rest of the buildings with adobe, since the earth there is good for that.

While construction was under way, two young men came from Mexico, nephews of Moteuczoma, bringing with them four respected elders as counselors and many others as servants for their personal service. They came to Cortés as ambassadors, presenting him with much cotton cloth, thick and well woven, some attractive and finely crafted featherwork, well-wrought pieces of gold and silver, and a casque filled with unsmelted gold nuggets in their natural state, all worth 2,090 castellanos in weight. They told him that their lord Moteuczoma sent him the gold in the casque to cure Cortés's illness and to let him know how he fared. They thanked him for releasing the two servants from his house and defending the others so that they were not put to death. He could be certain that Moteuczoma would reciprocate as to Cortés's own affairs, and begged him to release those still imprisoned. [Moteuczoma] forgave the [Quiahuahuizteca's] insubordination because **they** [LdeG: Moteuczoma] loved [Cortés] and offered him hospitality in their houses and town. But because [the Quiahuahuizteca] were prone to crimes and excesses, they might soon pay for their wrongdoing all at once like dogs deserving a beating. As to the other issues, they said that since Moteuczoma was ill and occupied with other wars and important business, he could not say where and how they should meet but surely would do so.

Cortés received them joyously and lodged them as best as he could in huts and tents at the riverbank. Then he sent for the lord of the rebel town called Quiahuahuiztlan. When he arrived, Cortés told him that his previous statements had come true, and that Moteuczoma would not dare to send his army or invade anywhere [Cortés] was. Therefore, **from then on** the lord and his allies within the league would remain free and exempt from servitude to Mexico, no longer paying tribute as they used to. Cortés asked him not to take offense if he released the prisoners and gave them to the ambassadors. The lord told him to do as he pleased, as they were at his mercy and would not deviate an inch from his command. Cortés dealt successfully with these people, for they did not understand his plotting. The lord returned to his town and the ambassadors to Mexico; everyone was very happy because Cortés spread the news and word of Moteuczoma's fear of the Spaniards throughout the Totonac mountain range. He had everyone take up arms and withdraw their fealty and tax payments to Mexico. [Moteuczoma's ambassadors] left with their prisoners and the many goods that Cortés gave them, such as linen, wool, hides, glass, and iron, astonished by the Spaniards and what they had seen.

[Chapter 39]. How Cortés Took Tizapancinco[124] by Force, **and Other Occurrences**

Not long afterward, the people of Cempoala asked Cortés to send Spaniards to help fight the garrison of Colhuaque that Moteuczoma had (f. 28v) in Tizapantzinco, since [Moteuczoma's forces] had caused great harm by burning and spoiling their lands and plots and capturing and killing the farmers. Tizapantzinco borders the Totonac peoples and lands of Cempoala. It is a well-protected town, since it is located next to a river with the fort built on high rock. Because of its strength and location amid people who rebelled at every turn, Moteuczoma had stationed many warriors there. Seeing that the rebels were armed and that the tax collectors and treasurers assigned to that province sought shelter in the fort, the warriors quelled the rebellion, in punishment capturing many people and laying waste to the land.

Cortés went to Cempoala and from there accompanied by a great army of his Indian friends he traveled on two days' journey to Tizapantzinco, which was located eight or more leagues from the city. The Colhuaque came out to the field expecting to encounter only Cempoalteca, but since they saw bearded men on horseback they froze and began to flee as fast as they could. As their refuge was close by, they attempted to take shelter and enter the garrison but were overtaken by the horsemen. Since the horses were unable to climb the rock, Cortés and four others dismounted and entered the fortress without resistance, rushing past the townspeople. They stood at the gate until the rest of the Spaniards arrived with many of their other Indian friends, to whom Cortés turned over the fortress and town. He urged them not to hurt the inhabitants and allow the soldiers guarding the garrison to go free but without their weapons and standards. All this was new to the Indians, who complied, while Cortés returned to the sea along the same route he had taken.

With this victory, the first that Cortés won against the peoples of Moteuczoma, the mountain range remained free from fear and abuse from Mexico. Our people gained great fame and reputation among our friends and enemies, so that afterward whenever they needed [help] they asked Cortés for one Spaniard only from his company, saying that one alone as their captain sufficed for their security. It was not a bad beginning for what Cortés intended. When he reached Veracruz, his people well satisfied with the victory, he found that Francisco de Salceda had

124. Tizpantzinco and Tizapancingo in Thomas, *Conquest*, 109 and 212–13, respectively, apparently in reference to the same locale. Tizapantzingo in Gerhard, *Guide*, 363–65 (Tizapantzinco hereinafter). It was inland from Veracruz.

already arrived with the caravel purchased from Alonso Caballero, a resident of Santiago de Cuba, from where he had left for repairs. The ship (f. 29) brought seventy Spaniards and nine horses and mares, which gave them no little encouragement and joy.

[Chapter 40]. The Gift that Cortés Sent to Emperor **Carlos V**

Cortés pressed the people to construct the houses and fortress in Veracruz, so that the residents and soldiers might be comfortably housed and protected against their enemies and the rains. He intended to soon move inland toward Mexico in search of Moteuczoma and wanted to leave everything secure and in place so that he might depart free of worry. He issued orders about various affairs dealing with both war and peace. As he had promised, he had all the arms, artillery, and barter items along with the provisions brought ashore and delivered to the cabildo.

He also told everyone that it was time to send the king an account of what had transpired and had been accomplished to date in the land, as well as the news and samples of the gold, silver, and riches that it contained. It was necessary to first set aside the royal fifth and to distribute the goods to each man, as was customary in war. To best do this he appointed Alonso de Ávila king's treasurer and Gonzalo de Mejía treasurer of the army. The alcaldes and regidores along with everyone else agreed with everything he said and that it should be done soon. They were happy with the appointments of the treasurers, confirming and encouraging them to accept.

He then had brought out to the square for everyone to see what had been given to them, the cotton clothing and the featherwork, which were much admired, and the totality of gold and silver that was worth 27,000 ducats in weight. Turning the goods over to the treasurers by weight and count, he told the cabildo to distribute them. Yet they replied that this was not necessary, because, aside from the king's fifth, the rest should go to pay Cortés for the provisions they had received and for the artillery and ships, which had been for everyone. He should therefore keep everything and faithfully send the king the best share.

Cortés told them that he would be compensated for his many expenditures and debts in time, but that at present he did not wish for anything more than his share as captain general. The rest could be used by the hidalgos to pay the small debts they had incurred to accompany him on this undertaking. Since he was sending the king more than his rightful share as the royal fifth, he begged them not (f. 29v) to take it amiss. It was the first gift they sent the king [and] as it included items impossible

to divide or melt down, it was appropriate to exceed what was customary when computing the fifth by weight or share. On their good will, he set aside from the total the following items:

Two disks made of gold and silver, which Teudilli gave him on behalf of Moteuczoma.

A gold necklace in eight pieces that had inlaid one hundred and eighty-three small emeralds, and two hundred and thirty-two small stones like rubies of little worth; with twenty-seven small gold bells and some baroque pearls dangling.

Another necklace with four twisted strands containing one hundred and two small rubies and one hundred and seventy-two emeralds, ten gold pearls not badly mounted and ringed with twenty-six gold bells. Both necklaces were worth seeing and had other excellent ornaments besides.

Many gold nuggets, none larger than a chickpea, just as they are found on the ground.

A casque level with unsmelted coarse nuggets.

A gold-plated wooden helmet encrusted with precious stones and twenty-five small gold bells as drinking cups [LdeG: and topped with a green bird with gold eyes, beak, and feet].

A small casque made of gold sheets, encircled with small bells with a cover encrusted with precious stones.

A very thin gold bracelet.

A **beautiful** staff similar to a royal scepter topped with two gold rings and adorned with pearls.

Four three-pronged claws covered with feathers of many colors, tipped with baroque pearls tied with gold thread.

Many shoes like deerskin espadrilles **or sandals** sewn with gold thread, with the soles made of very thin and transparent white and blue stone.

Six pairs of leather shoes of various colors decorated with gold, silver, or pearls.

A shield of wood and leather rimmed with small brass bells, its boss a plate of gold sculpted with the figure of Huitzilopochtli, God of War, and on four sides four heads vividly representing a lion, tiger, eagle, and owl covered with the original fur and feathers.

Many hides from birds and animals dressed with their own feathers and fur.

Twenty-four colorful shields, **finely worked** with gold, feathers, and seed pearls.

(f. 30) Five shields of feathers and silver.

Four gold fish, two ducks, hollow, and other birds cast from gold.

Two large gold snails unlike any found in Spain and a frightful crocodile bound with many thick threads of gold.

A brass bar, and some axes and items like hoes of the same metal.

A large mirror adorned with gold and other small ones.

Many miters and crowns of finely wrought gold and feathers of a thousand colors, with pearls and stones.

Many beautiful feathers of all colors, not dyed but natural.

Many large handsome feather pieces, rich with adornments of gold and seed pearls.

Many large and small fans of gold and feathers and of feathers only, of all kinds, and all very beautiful.

A manta like a cape of woven cotton of many colors and feathers, with a design of a black wheel and spokes in the middle, plain on the inside.

Many surplices, priests' clothing, palliums, frontals, and ornaments for temples and altars.

Many more cotton mantas, either white, checkered black [LdeG: and white], red, green, yellow, or blue, and other such colors. However, on the inside without color or nap; on the outside, furry like felt.

Many shirts, jackets, cotton scarves, items for men.

Many bed covers, hangings, and cotton rugs.

All of these items were more attractive than valuable, although the disks were very precious. The workmanship was more valuable than the things themselves due to the exquisite colors of the cotton cloth and the natural colors of the feathers. The castwork, which we will discuss later, surpassed the craft of our silversmiths. Along with these items they included some books of pictorial writing rather than letters that the Mexica used folded as linen and written all over. Some were made of cotton and paste and others of *metl*, "maguey," **or *texamatl* leaves**[125] **and made from the**

125. Rémi Siméon, *Diccionario de la lengua nahuatl o mexicana* (México, 1977), 540, states that *texamatl* is "a kind of paper made from tree bark whose leaves are glued together." Regarding the tree, Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, 11:111, refers to the *amaquahuitl*, which Anderson and Dibble identify as *Ficus benjamina*.

bark of a tree called *palmito* that serve as paper—a wonder to see. However, since the Spaniards were unable to understand the content, they were not appreciated.

By that time, the Cempoalteca had many people ready for sacrifice. To avert their sacrifice, Cortés requested that they be handed over to him to send to the emperor along with the gifts. However, they refused, saying that their gods would be angry and would take away their maize, children, and lives if they surrendered them. He still took four men as well as two women. Dressed in feathers, the handsome young men had gone dancing throughout the city, asking for alms for their sacrifice and death. They were greatly admired and received many donations. They wore gold earrings with turquoise and large rings also of gold in the lower lip revealing their teeth, considered an ugly fashion in Spain but attractive there.

[Chapter 41]. The Letters from the Cabildo and the Army to the Emperor Regarding Cortés's Appointment as Governor

(f. 30v) When the gifts and royal fifth for the king had been set aside, Cortés asked the cabildo to appoint two agents, who would also receive his power of attorney and flagship for their transport. The cabildo designated Alcaldes Alonso Hernández de Portocarrero and Francisco de Montejo. Cortés, pleased with the decision, assigned Antonio de Alaminos as their pilot. As collective agents, they took as much gold as they thought necessary to travel to Spain, negotiate, and return. They did the same with their provisions for the sea.

Cortés gave them power of attorney to carry out his affairs with an order as to what to request and do on his behalf at court in Seville and in his hometown [Medellín], which was to deliver some castellanos and the news of his prosperity to his father Martín Cortés and his mother. He sent with them the account and proceedings of what had transpired. He also wrote a very long letter to the emperor **(**he addressed him as such, although he was not yet aware of Charles V's election**)** in which he gave a complete report of all that had occurred from the time he left Santiago de Cuba. He related the discord and differences between him and Diego Velázquez, the grudges **or quarrels** in his camp, the hardships that everyone had suffered, the goodwill he brought to royal service, the greatness and riches of the land, and his hope of subjecting it to the royal crown of Castile. He offered to win Mexico for him and to capture the great king Moteuczoma, dead or alive. Finally, he begged don Carlos V to keep him in mind and to repay his labors and costs by rewarding him

with the appointments and grants to be dispatched to that new land which he discovered at his own expense.

The cabildo of Veracruz also wrote the emperor two letters, one signed only by alcaldes and regidores describing the accomplishments of the few Spanish hidalgos in his royal service in that newly discovered land. The other letter, approved and signed by the cabildo and all the army, in substance confirmed their will to hold and defend the villa and land they had won in his royal name and even to die for it if His Majesty so ordered. They humbly begged him to grant the governorship of that land and all else they might conquer to Hernando Cortés, their leader, captain general, and justicia mayor elected by them. He was most deserving, as he had spent more on that fleet and journey than anyone else. They asked that he be confirmed in the name of His Majesty in the office that they themselves had willingly granted to him for their own betterment and safety. If, by chance, [the emperor] had already bestowed and granted that office and government post to someone else, they requested that he revoke his decision, as most appropriate for his service, their benefit and advancement, and that of those lands. This would also avoid the quarrels, scandals, dangers, and deaths that would follow if someone else governed, commanded, or was sent as their captain. They also begged him to reply promptly (f. 31) and to favorably resolve all matters pertaining to the cabildo.

On July 26, 1519, Alonso Hernández de Portocarrero, Francisco de Montejo, and Antonio de Alaminos departed from Quiahuahuiztlan and Villa Rica on a sound ship, with the powers of attorney of Cortés and the cabildo of Villa Rica de la Veracruz, along with the letters, proceedings, affidavits, and accounts that I have mentioned. On their way they stopped at Marién de Cuba, and saying that they were headed to Havana, they passed without stopping along the Bahama Channel, sailing under favorable weather until they reached Spain. The cabildo and army officers had written their letter because they feared Diego Velázquez's influence at court and at the Council of the Indies.[126] Francisco de Salceda's arrival had precipitated the rumor in camp that the emperor had granted Velázquez the governorship of the land upon Benito Martín's[127]

126. It warrants noting that the Council of the Indies was not established by HRE Carlos V (r. 1519–1558) until 1524. However, Ernesto Schäfer, *El Consejo Real y Supremo de las Indias: Su historia, organización y labor administrativa hasta la terminación de la Casa de Austria* (Seville, 1935), 1:37, states that, before 1519, judicial matters were handled by the Council of Castile and that only administrative matters were decided by Fonseca and Conchillos. Beginning in 1519, documents record the expression "Consejo de Indias," meaning a special chapter of the Council of Castile.

127. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 359–60, probably Martínez. He persuaded the king to give

trip to Spain. Although they did not know for certain, this was indeed a fact, as is mentioned elsewhere.

[Chapter 42]. The Mutiny Against Cortés, and the Punishment that **He Inflicted**

There were many in the camp who complained about Cortés's election because it excluded Diego Velázquez from the land. Some were involved with [Velázquez] as servants, others as debtors, and others as friends. They claimed it was all arranged by deception, flattery, and bribes, and that Cortés falsely made the Spaniards beg him to accept his office. His election as captain and alcalde mayor should never have been carried out without the authority of the Hieronymite friars who governed the Indies, especially since it was publicly known that Diego Velázquez was already the governor of the land of Yucatan.

On learning of it, Cortés found out for himself who had spread the rumors, apprehended the principales, and put them on a ship. He released them shortly to pacify everyone, yet matters became worse. These same people later plotted to rebel on a brigantine, kill the master, and leave for Cuba to inform Diego Velázquez of what was occurring and about the splendid gifts that Cortés was sending to the emperor. They intended that Velázquez seize the treasure from the agents when passing by Havana along with the letters and account so that the emperor, not receiving them, would not think himself well served by Cortés and all the rest. Cortés became very angry, apprehending and interrogating many of them. Since they confessed the truth, he condemned those who bore the most blame following procedure and based on the circumstance. Juan Escudero and Diego Cermeño, a pilot, were hanged; Gonzalo de Umbria,[128] also a pilot, and Alonso Peñate were whipped; but the rest were not touched. With this punishment Cortés made himself feared and held in higher regard than before. In truth, had he been tentative, he would never have controlled them. His neglect would have doomed him for they would have warned Velázquez in time for him to capture the ship with the gifts [LdeG: letters] and the reports. Later, Velázquez attempted its capture, sending a war caravel, since Montejo and Portocarrero were not so secretive in sailing (f. 31v) past the island of Cuba that Velázquez was unaware of their actions.

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the title of adelantado to Velázquez, and he was instrumental in having the Casa de Contratación impound Cortés's first shipment of goods and letters to Spain (1519).

128. Ibid., 133, notes that Umbria was said to be a "good soldier," although Cortés reportedly had a part of one of his feet cut off.

[Chapter 43]. **How** Cortés, **Using Great Cunning**, Scuttled His Ships

Although Cortés intended to go to Mexico, he concealed it from the **Spanish** soldiers so they would not refuse to proceed because of the difficulties stressed by **Governor**[129] Teudilli and the others. The concern was that since the city was situated upon water, they believed it to be exceedingly well fortified, which in fact it was. In order that all follow him despite their reluctance, he planned to destroy the ships. It was a serious and dangerous undertaking, and a great loss. He gave much thought to it, not because he cared about losing the ships but to keep his companions from stopping him, which they would have done and even mutinied had they found out.

Determined to destroy the ships, he arranged with some of the shipmasters to secretly scuttle them so they would sink without a chance to pump or plug them. He arranged for other pilots to spread the rumor that the vessels were worn out, corroded by sea worms, and in no condition for sailing. They should publicly announce this to him so he could not blame them afterward. They did as he commanded, asserting in front of everyone that the ships were no longer fit, and he should decide what to do because they were worm eaten and leaking badly. Everyone believed them, since they had been there more than three months, time enough for the ships to be bored by worms.

After having discussed it at length, Cortés ordered his men to salvage as many items as possible and [then] let the ships founder and sink. He pretended to feel sorrow over such a great loss **and cost**. Removing first the artillery, arms, provisions, sails, ropes, anchors, and all other rigging they could later use, he beached the five best ships. They sank four others, but with some difficulty because the Spaniards had discovered Cortés's plan and complained that he intended to ruin them. He appeased them by stating that those who did not wish to make war in such a rich land, or to remain in his company, were free to return to Cuba on the ship that was left for that purpose. He proposed this to uncover the cowards and opponents so as not to trust or assign any tasks to them.

Many shamelessly asked his license to return to Cuba. Half of them were mariners who preferred the sea rather than war. Many others also wished to leave, seeing the vastness of the land and the multitude of people, but they were ashamed to show cowardice in public. On hearing this, Cortés ordered the remaining ship sunk. Thus, no one was left with

129. Native rulers most often had official titles and offices specific to their polities. However, throughout his narrative, LdeG is loose with titles such as captain, governor, and lord and seems to associate the title of governor with anyone in authority at the time. In this instance, it is C. who added the title.

any hope of escape at that time; and all gave praise to Cortés for his action. Considering the circumstances, the feat was most appropriate for the time and carried out judiciously by a resolute, if overconfident, captain. It suited his purpose, even though he lost much by sinking his ships and was left without the force and succor of the sea. There are but few examples like these, all of great men, such as one-armed Omiche ['Aruj] Barbarossa, (f. 32) who several years before had destroyed seven galleys and vessels in order to capture Bujía [Bougie], as I wrote about at length in my history, *Batallas del mar de nuestros tiempos*.[130]

[Chapter 44]. The **Indians of** Tlaxcala [*sic*][131] **Cast Down** Their Idols Because of Cortés's Admonitions

Cortés could not wait to see Moteuczoma. He publicized his departure and set aside from his army one hundred and fifty Spaniards which he believed sufficient to populate and safeguard the villa of Veracruz and the fortress, which was almost finished. He appointed Pedro de Ircio[132] as their captain and left them with two horses, another two muskets, and many Indians to serve them. There were fifty towns of friends and allies nearby from which they could recruit fifty thousand or more warriors if needed.

Cortés left with the rest of the Spaniards for Cempoala, which is located four leagues from the town. He had just arrived when he learned that four ships belonging to Francisco de Garay[133] were sailing along the coast. Returning with one hundred Spaniards to Veracruz because of the news, [Cortés] was suspicious of the ships. Upon his arrival, he discovered that Pedro de Ircio had already gone to investigate who they were, what they wanted, and to invite them to the town in case they had need of anything. On learning that they had anchored three leagues away, Cortés went there to join Pedro de Ircio, bringing along a squadron to see if anyone had landed in order to inquire and determine their inten-

130. "Sea Battles of Our Times"; see LdeG, *Guerras de mar del emperador Carlos V*, ed. Miguel Angel de Bunes Ibarra and Nora Edith Jiménez (Madrid, 2000), 93–94.

131. Cempoala in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 91.

132. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 70, reports that Ircio had a "game" leg, which may explain why he was first posted at Villa Rica and then later at Segura de la Frontera, rather than serve in active combat.

133. Ibid., 339–40, adds that Garay came to the Indies with Colón on his second voyage. He successfully explored for mines in Santo Domingo and soon was among the richest men on the island. He built the first private stone house and also built the chapel at San Francisco church. He was the second governor of Jamaica and in 1519 personally equipped five ships to explore the Gulf coast. In 1523 he outfitted another eleven ships to conquer and colonize Pánuco (north of Villa Rica). He died suddenly while visiting Cortés in 1523.

tions. He feared evil from them since they had not anchored near the town or entered the harbor when they had been invited, so he thought they may be up to no good.

After traveling for about a league, Cortés found three Spaniards from the ships, one of whom said he was an escribano, and the other two witnesses. They came to notify him of some documents—which they did not produce—and to present him with a summons to divide the territories between him and Captain Garay by marking appropriate boundaries. Garay claimed the land as first discoverer and wanted to settle and populate a site on the coast twenty leagues from there to the west, near Nauhtlan, which is now called Almería.[134] Cortés told them to first return to their ships and tell their captain to come to Veracruz with [the men in] his fleet. There they would discuss how each had established his claims and, if in need of help, Cortés would provide it. And if, as they said, he came to serve the king, Cortés wished nothing more than to guide and help them, as they were all Spaniards and there in the king's name. They replied that under no circumstance would Captain Garay or any of his men come ashore or near where Cortés was staying.

Seeing their resolve, Cortés assessed the situation and captured them. He positioned himself behind a high sand dune, facing the ships, for it was almost dark. There he ate, slept, and stayed until late the following day, waiting for Garay or some pilot, or any other person to come ashore. Cortés wanted to capture them to learn where they had been (f. 32v) and what harm they had done **in the land**. In the latter case, he planned to send them back to Spain as prisoners; in the former, he would find out whether they had talked to Moteuczoma's people, as their great distrust, he believed, could be due to a wrong message.

He had three of his men switch clothes with the messengers and go to the inlet to call and wave their capes at the Spaniards on the ships. About a dozen men came in a skiff with crossbows and escopetas, either because they recognized the clothes or because they were called. In order not to be recognized, Cortés's men, who were wearing the other men's garments, hid in some bushes, as if to shade themselves from the noonday sun. Those in the skiff sent ashore two men armed with escopetas, two crossbowmen, and one Indian. They walked straight to the bushes, believing that those there were their companions. Cortés and many others rushed out and grabbed them before they could return to their boat. Attempting to defend themselves, one of them, a pilot armed with an escopeta, confronted Captain Ircio and would have killed him, had he

134. Gerhard, *Guide*, 373–74, states that Nauhtlan was located well north of Villa Rica and served as a Mexica outpost along the Gulf Coast.

a good fuse and gunpowder. Seeing the deception from the ships, the Spaniards did not wait and set sail before their skiff returned.

From the seven captured men, Cortés learned that Garay had traveled a long stretch of the coast in search of Florida. He arrived at a river and land whose king was named Pánuco.[135] There they found little gold and bartered without leaving their ships [LdeG: merchandise valued up to 3,000 gold pesos, obtaining a large quantity of food in exchange for barter goods]. Francisco de Garay was not satisfied with any place he had visited because the little gold he did find was of poor quality. With no further news, Cortés returned to Cempoala with the same one hundred Spaniards [LdeG: that he brought with him].

There, he persuaded the townspeople to cast down their idols and the tombs of their caciques **(**which they also revered as gods**)** and to worship instead the God of heaven and the cross that he was leaving with them. He made a friendship pact with them and the neighboring towns, forming a confederation against Moteuczoma. They gave [Cortés] hostages to ensure their firm loyalty to him, as they would not betray him or break their promises and would provide supplies for the Spaniards that he had left as garrison at Veracruz. They also offered to place at his disposal as many people as needed for war and service. Cortés took the hostages, who were many; the principal ones were Mamexi, Teuch, **or Teuctli,** and Tamalli**tzin**.[136] He requested one thousand tamemes to carry their loads and supply the army with water and firewood. Tamemes are porters, men serving as pack animals or droves, who carry two arrobas [of goods] on their backs from any distance. They hauled the artillery and carried the cargo and food supplies.

[Chapter 45]. Olimtletl, **Lord of Zaclotan,**[137] Extols the Might **and Greatness** of Moteuczoma

On August sixteenth of the same year, Cortés departed Cempoala **(**which he called Seville**)** (f. 33) for Mexico, along with four hundred

135. This is one of several instances in which both the ruler and polity have the same name, or at least according to LdeG.

136. Thomas, *Conquest*, 227, 235, also has Mamexi, whom he identifies as a Totonac chief of Cempoala. He identifies Teuch as a Totonac ruler, 231, 246. LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 93, has Tamalli, with no political office described.

137. Zacotlan (Zautla) in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 95. Díaz del Castillo, *Discovery*, 116–17, has Xocotlan and the ruler as Olintecle. Gerhard, *Guide*, 390–92, locates a Zacatlan de las Manzanas in northern Puebla and describes it as a region of variable climates. Nahuas, Totonacs, and Otomis resided in the territory of Zacatlan and were hostile to the Tlaxcalteca.

Spaniards, fifteen horses, six small cannons, and one thousand three hundred Indians in all including nobles and warriors as well as tamemes, among whom I count those from Cuba. When Cortés left Cempoala, he had none of Moteuczoma's men to guide him directly to Mexico. All had left, either out of fear when they learned about the alliance or by order of their towns and lords. Those from Cempoala were not familiar with the route.

During the first three days, the army traveled through the lands of their friends, who received and lodged Cortés well, especially in Jalapa.[138] On the fourth day he reached Xicochimalco,[139] which is a place well positioned on the slope of a very rugged mountain, where two paths like stairs were cut by hand for access. Had the inhabitants resisted the Spaniards, it would have been difficult for the foot soldiers to ascend those paths and even more so for the horsemen. But as it became known later, they had orders from Moteuczoma to lodge, respect, and provide for the Spaniards. They even assured the Spaniards that since they were headed to see their Lord Moteuczoma, he was their friend. Xicochimalco has many good hamlets and farmhouses on the plain from where Moteuczoma could draw five thousand warriors, when necessary. Cortés gave many thanks to the lord for the lodging and good treatment and for Moteuczoma's good will.

After taking his leave, Cortés crossed a very high mountain range through a pass that he named Nombre de Dios, since it was the first he traversed. There are few passes in Spain equal to this one, since it is high and very rugged, has no fixed trail, and its ascent is three leagues in length. There are many vines with grapes and trees with honey. On his descent, Cortés entered Teoixhuacan[140]—which is another fortress and village of Moteuczoma's friends—where they welcomed our people as in the previous town. From this point on, Cortés traveled for three days through deserted land and an uninhabitable saltpeter field. They experienced hunger and, much worse, thirst due to the high salt content of the water, which many Spaniards drank, as there was no fresh water, making some ill. They were pounded by a hail storm and became chilled, which brought them much distress and grief. The Spaniards spent a terrible night from both the cold and their illness. The Indians feared for

138. Gerhard, *Guide*, 373, locates Jalapa today in the state of Veracruz. It was once a Totonac territory that by 1519 had been taken over by Mexica, at least in the southern part.
139. Ibid., said to be a fortress settlement on a hillside, Xicochimalco was the principal Nahuatl-speaking state in the region.
140. Ixhuacan in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 94. Teoixhuacan in Gerhard, *Guide*, 373, and described as a dependency of Xicochimalco, a major Nahuatl-speaking fortress in former Totonac territory.

their lives and some from Cuba died, for they were poorly clothed and not fit for the frigid temperatures of the mountains.

After four days of rough terrain, they climbed yet another mountain, though not so steep. At the summit they found a thousand cartloads **(**according to their estimation**)** of firewood, cut and stacked, next to a small tower containing some idols. They named this place Puerto de la Leña. Beyond the pass for two leagues the land was barren and poor. The army soon came to a place that they called Castilblanco, after the lords' houses made from newly cut white stone, the best (f. 33v) they had seen in the land so far and very well worked, causing them no little wonder.

In their language that place is called Zaclotan **or Zacatlan**, the valley is Zacatami, and their lord is **Olintletl** [LdeG: Olintec],[141] who received Cortés well. He lodged and abundantly provisioned the men because Moteuczoma had instructed him to treat Cortés honorably, according to what he himself said later. At Moteuczoma's news and order and for his pleasure, they gladly sacrificed fifty men, whose blood the Spaniards witnessed flowing fresh and clean. Many from the town carried the Spaniards on their shoulders and in hammocks, which is almost like carrying them on a litter.

Cortés spoke to them through his interpreters, Marina and Aguilar, explaining the reason for his coming there and making his usual statements. He finally asked the lord whether he had met or knew of Moteuczoma. Seemingly astonished at the question, he replied, "Is there anyone who is not a vassal or a slave of Moteuczomatzin?" Cortés then told him about the emperor and king of Spain. He asked him to be a friend and to serve such a great king as the one he spoke of, and if he had gold, to give him some to send to the emperor. The lord answered that he would not disobey his Lord Moteuczoma, nor would he give him any gold without his command, although he had plenty. Cortés remained silent, disregarding what he said, because he found him to be courageous and his people resourceful and warlike. Instead, Cortés asked the lord to describe the greatness of King Moteuczoma. He replied that Moteuczoma was lord of the world, that he had thirty **lords as his** vassals with one hundred thousand warriors each, that he sacrificed twenty thousand people each year, that he resided in the most beautiful and best fortified city of all the settlements, that his house and court were very large, noble, and magnificent, that his wealth was beyond belief, and that his expenses were exorbitant. The lord certainly told the truth about everything, only

141. Note that C. has substituted LdeG's *-tec* ending with *-tletl*. Later, LdeG replaces the absolutive ending with a locative suffix, and C. adds an honorific, yielding the proper name Olintlectzin.

he exaggerated the sacrifices. However, theirs was truly an enormous slaughter of men killed in sacrifice at every temple, and some Spaniards say that in some years they had sacrificed fifty thousand men. While they were having this conversation, two lords from the same valley arrived to see the Spaniards, each presenting to Cortés four slave women and an equal number of gold necklaces, though of little value.

Moteuczoma's subject, Olintletl, was a great lord with twenty thousand vassals. He had a total of thirty wives in his own house, along with more than one hundred women who served them and two thousand retainers for his service and protection. The town was very large, with thirteen temples, each with many different stone idols, before which, using censers and much veneration, they sacrificed men, doves, quail, and other things. Here and throughout his territory, Moteuczoma had five thousand men serving in garrison, frontier, and relay posts (f. 34) all the way to Mexico. Until now, Cortés had never understood so clearly and concretely Moteuczoma's wealth and might. He foresaw many impediments, difficulties, fears, and other concerns on his way to Mexico, but showed not the slightest sign of cowardice, despite hearing about what might cause many brave men to faint. Instead, the more marvels told about that great lord, the more he wished to meet him.

Since on his way he had to pass through Tlaxcala, which everyone said was a large and well-fortified city [LdeG: with a warlike lineage], Cortés sent four Cempoalteca to its lords and captains, offering them friendship and peace on his behalf and that of the Cempoalteca and their confederates and informing them that a few Spaniards were headed to their town to visit and serve them. He asked them to honor his request **and that of the Cempoalteca**. Cortés believed that the people of Tlaxcala would act in the same manner as the Cempoalteca, who were good and loyal to him. Because until now everything the Cempoalteca said had turned out to be true, Cortés also believed this time that the Tlaxcalteca were the Cempoalteca's friends and would be glad to become friends with him and his companions. He believed they were bitter enemies of Moteuczoma and would readily go with him to Mexico in case of war because they wished to free themselves and avenge the harm and offenses inflicted by the peoples of Colhua over the course of many years.

Cortés rested at Zacatlan for five days, a place with a cool river bank and gentle people. He put many crosses in the temples, knocking down their idols, as he did in each place he went along the road. Leaving the **local lord** Olintlec**tzin** very happy, he went to a site two leagues up the river that belonged to Iztacmixtitlan,[142] one of the lords who had given

142. LdeG appears to again be mistaking the place name for the Indian leader's proper

him slaves and necklaces. This town extends along a plain [LdeG: and a riverbank] for a span of two leagues, with so many hamlets that they almost touch one another, at least where our army passed. It must have had more than five thousand households, and is located on a high hill. The lord's house is on one side of the hill with the best fortress in those regions and is as good as any in Spain. It was walled with very good stone and had a barbican and a deep moat. Cortés rested there for three days to recuperate from his recent travel and toil, waiting for the four messengers he had sent from Zacatlan to see what answer they would bring.

[Chapter 46]. Cortés's First Clash with the Tlaxcalteca

Cortés left Zacatlan without any intelligence about Tlaxcala, since the messengers had not arrived. Our army had not traveled far after leaving there, when, as they left the valley, they ran into a great stone wall one and one half estados tall and twenty feet wide with a two-palmo parapet for fighting from above. It stretched the length of the entire valley from one mountain ridge to the other, having only one entrance ten pasos wide, where one wall doubled back on itself like a ravelin and made a narrow path forty pasos long, formidable and difficult to pass if someone (f. 34v) were there to defend it.

Cortés asked why the wall existed and who built it. **Lord** Iztacmixtitlan, who accompanied him to that point, replied that it was a marker separating his lands from those of Tlaxcala. His ancestors had built it to prevent the Tlaxcalteca from entering during war time, because they came to pillage and kill them, since he and his people were friends and vassals of Moteuczoma. Our Spaniards regarded such an expensive and ostentatious wall a sign of greatness but also as useless and superfluous, since there were other passes nearby to reach the place by going around. However, they still surmised that the men of Tlaxcala were brave and valiant warriors since such an obstacle was placed in their way.

Because the army admired the wall's magnificence—**and for this they halted a while—Lord** Iztacmixtitlan thought that they were retreating in fear of going forward, so he begged and implored the captain as his friend not to go in that direction. Since [Cortés] was going to see his lord Moteuczoma, he should not think about entering and crossing the land

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name. Iztaquimaxtitlan is used as a place name in both Thomas, *Conquest*, 236, and Gerhard, *Guide*, 228, who describes it as "a mountain-top garrison." LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 95, 97, has Ixtacamaxtitlan as the indigenous name of the town called Castilblanco, and later, 98–99, as the name of the lord of that same town who accompanied Cortés on his approach to Tlaxcala (Iztacmixtitlan hereinafter).

of the Tlaxcalteca, who might harm him because he was Iztacmixtitlan's friend and would mistreat him as they mistreated others. He offered to guide and take him only through the lands of Moteuczoma where he would be well received and provided for all the way to Mexico.

Lord Mamexic and other lords from Cempoala told him to heed their advice instead and by no means follow the route Iztacmixtitlan recommended, for this scheme would lead him away from the friendship of that province, whose people were honest, good, and valiant. Moreover, they said that Iztacmixtitlan did not want Cortés to join forces with them against Moteuczoma, for that lord and his people were evil and deceitful traitors who would lead the Spaniards into a trap where they would be killed and eaten. Cortés was perplexed for a while, **or perhaps for an hour**, by the conflicting counsel he was given. He finally took Mamexic's advice, resuming his journey to Tlaxcala, because the Spaniards thought better of the Cempoalteca and their allies than the others, and he did not want to show any fear.

Taking his leave of Lord Iztacmixtitlan, Cortés received three hundred soldiers from him and entered through the opening in the wall. He then marched with great caution and in good order, keeping the cannons ready. He himself would join those in the lead who went ahead by half a league and more to reconnoiter the field so that, in case something occurred, they would have time to return and regroup the army to select a good place for battle or set up camp.

Having traveled more than three leagues' distance from the wall, Cortés sent word to the infantry to march quickly since it was late, and he went ahead about a league with the horsemen. Reaching the top of a slope, the two lead horsemen came upon fifteen men with swords, shields, and the feather headdresses they customarily wear in battle. They were scouts **or spies**, and when they saw the horsemen they started to run, either out of fear or to signal an alert. Then Cortés arrived with three companions on horseback; in spite of his shouts and gestures the natives did not wait, and all six horsemen raced after them to prevent their escape so they could question them. He overtook them, for they crowded together, (f. 35) determined to die rather than surrender. Signaling them to be still, he moved to take them alive, but they wished only to fight with their swords, so Cortés and his men engaged them in battle. For a while they defended themselves bravely against the six horsemen, wounding two and killing two horses with two blows. According to some **trustworthy men** who saw this, the natives sliced cleanly through each horse's neck in one stroke, reins and all, **leaving the Spaniards astonished and amazed.**

Meanwhile, another four horsemen arrived, followed by the rest. Cortés sent one to hurry **the infantry**, as an orderly squadron of five thousand

Indians was already upon them to aid and assist their comrades, whom they had seen fighting. However, they arrived too late, as the Spaniards had killed and speared them all, enraged by the killing of the two horses and their refusal to surrender. The Indians continued to fight spiritedly and courageously against the horsemen until they saw the foot soldiers, the artillery, and the other company draw near. They then retreated, leaving the field to our men. The men on horseback safely wove through the enemy lines in spite of their numbers, killing up to seventy of them.

After the Indians left, they sent some of their people, two messengers they had held for days, to tell the captain that the people of Tlaxcala said they knew nothing of what the other communities had done without their license. However, they were sorry and would pay for the horses, since the incident had occurred in their land. They stated that [the Spaniards] were welcome to come to their town, where the Tlaxcalteca would be glad to receive them as their friends because they thought them valiant men.

It was all lies. Cortés believed them and thanked them for their courtesy and good will, saying he agreed to be their friend and that they did not need to pay for his horses because he would soon receive many more. However, God knows how much he grieved this loss, knowing the Indians had learned that horses could die and be killed. Although the sun was setting and his people were tired from having walked most of the day, Cortés pushed ahead for almost a league, beyond where the killing of the horses took place, because he wanted to set up camp at a secure site with access to water. He settled next to a stream, remaining in fear that night and posting guards, both on foot and on horseback. However, as their enemies gave no scare, his men were able to rest more easily than anticipated.

[Chapter 47]. **How** One Hundred and Forty Thousand Gathered Against Cortés

At sunrise the next day Cortés left with his squadron in good order, transporting the supplies with the artillery at the center. When they arrived at a small nearby town, they encountered the other two Cempoalteca messengers he had sent from Zacatlan. The messengers were in tears, saying that the captains of the Tlaxcalteca army had tied them up [LdeG: and detained them], but they had freed themselves and escaped that night. They explained that the Tlaxcalteca wished to sacrifice them at dawn to the God of Victory and eat them in order to give the war a good start and also to signal that they would treat (f. 35v) the bearded Spaniards and everyone in their company in the same fashion.

The messengers had barely finished their story when up to one thousand Indians appeared from behind a small hill less than a crossbow shot away. The Indians were very well armed and came yelling to the skies, throwing darts **like small spears**, stones, and arrows at our people. Cortés made many peace gestures to prevent a fight. He spoke with them through interpreters, begging them and making a formal plea before a notary and witnesses not to resist, as if that made any difference, or as if they understood him. The more the Spaniards spoke to them, the more the Indians rushed into combat, expecting them to disperse or fall into a trap and as they led them into an ambush of more than eighty thousand men positioned between large gorges that cut through the road and created a **very** rough pass.

Our men exchanged weapons for words. A spirited battle broke out among them, as they numbered one thousand on each side. The Indians were skillful and brave men and in a better position to fight. The battle lasted many hours and, at the end, whether because they were tired or because they wanted to entrap their enemies and overwhelm them effortlessly,[143] the Indians slackened and retreated toward their camp, not dispersing but in a group. Our men, energized by the fight and no few killings, followed with all the people and supplies. Without realizing it, they found themselves in streams and ravines in the midst of countless armed Indians who awaited them there. The Spaniards remained together so as not to break formation and passed through with great fear and difficulty, because of the harsh fighting and struggle waged by their opponents.

Among the Indians there were many who rushed at the horsemen in those rugged passages in order to seize their spears, so daring **and bold** were they. Many Spaniards would have been left behind to perish had it not been for the help of their Indian friends. Cortés's efforts [LdeG: and solace] were also a great help, because even though he led the cavalry to clear the path, from time to time he came back to regroup the squadron and encourage his people. Finally, they came out from the ravines onto a flat, open field where they were able to charge with the horses and bring the artillery into play, two strategies that caused great harm to the enemy. The Indians were awed by the novelty and soon fled. Many Indians were killed and wounded on this day in the two skirmishes. Among the Spaniards some were wounded, but none was killed.

All gave thanks to God for delivering them from such a multitude of enemies. Overjoyed with their victory, they went to set up camp at

143. From the Spanish saying, *No se pescan truchas a bragas enjutas*, "One cannot fish for trout without getting wet." *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Madrid, 1990; facsimile), 1:668 (*DA* hereinafter).

a small town called Teoacatcinco,[144] a village of a few houses [LdeG: things] that had a small tower and a temple that the Spaniards used as a stronghold. They put up many huts of boughs and straw, which the tamemes brought later. The Indians from Cempoala and Iztacmixtitlan[145] who accompanied our army, had done such a good job that Cortés thanked them sincerely, no matter whether their help was due to fear of being eaten, (f. 36) shame, or friendship.

That night, the first of September, our men slept poorly, fearing an attack by the enemy, but the Indians did not come because they are not used to fighting at night. Later, at daybreak, Cortés sent messengers to the captains of Tlaxcala imploring and requesting them to accept this peace and friendship and allow him to pass peacefully through their land to Mexico, for he would do them no harm nor bring any trouble whatsoever. He left two hundred Spaniards, the tamemes, and the artillery in his camp. He took the remaining two hundred Spaniards, three hundred Indians from Iztacmixtitlan, and up to four hundred Cempoalteca, and went with them and the horses to ransack the countryside. Before the natives of the land were able to gather together, he went to burn five or six towns and returned with up to four hundred prisoners. The Spaniards were not harmed, even though the Indians followed them fighting all the way to the tower and the camp. There, Cortés received the answer from the enemy captains who said they would come another day to see him and give him their reply.

Cortés was on alert that night, since the answer seemed to him defiant and resolute. Moreover, the prisoners assured him that one hundred and fifty thousand men were gathering to fall upon the Spaniards the next day and devour them alive. They loathed the Spaniards, believing they were great friends of Moteuczoma, upon whom they wished death and all evil would befall. This was true, for the Tlaxcalteca rallied as many people as possible in order to capture the Spaniards and turn them into the most solemn sacrifices and offerings ever given to their gods. They also intended to feast on their flesh, which they described as heavenly.

Tlaxcala is divided into four districts or family names which are Tepeticpac, Ocotelulco, **Yzatlan**,[146] and Quiauiztlan,[147] which is like saying in Spanish "People of the Highlands," "People of the Pine Grove," "People of the Chalk," and "People of the Water." Each of these family names has its captain and lord, whom they all obey and attend, and together they form the body of the republic and the city. They command

144. Teoacatzinco (and hereinafter).
145. Note that Iztacmixtitlan is used here as a place name, not a personal name.
146. [LdeG: Tiçatlan]. Tizatlan (and hereinafter).
147. Quiauixtlan (and hereinafter).

and govern in peacetime and war. Thus, in this war there were four captains, one from each district, but the general of the entire army was one of these four captains named Xicotencatl. He belonged to the People of the Chalk and carried the city standard, which is a golden crane with extended wings adorned with enamel and silver filigree. He carried it at the rear, as was customary during war, for otherwise it is carried at the head. The second captain was Maxixcatzin. The entire army was almost one hundred and fifty thousand warriors strong. For all their rallying and bombast against four hundred Spaniards, at the end they were defeated and forced to surrender, although they later became great friends with the Spaniards.

Before dawn the next day, as the four captains promised, they positioned themselves next to the Spaniards. Their entire army covered the field, with only a large ravine separating the two. They were splendid people, well armed as was their custom, although they had painted themselves with red annato and black xagua dye[148] so that their faces resembled demons. They wore large feather headdresses and did battle (f. 36v) admirably. They carried slings, lances, spears, swords—which here are called halberds—bows, and arrows without poison. They also wore helmets and arm and leg armor of wood, though gilded or covered with feathers or leather. Their cuirasses were made of cotton; their round shields and bucklers were handsome and quite strong, since they were made of red wood and leather, with brass[149] and feathers. Their swords were made of **oak** wood, **hardened along the edges,** and **set with black** flint **knives which cut as well as tempered steel** and caused serious wounds. The army was divided into squadrons, each with many horns, conch shells, and drums. It was truly worth seeing, and never did the Spaniards encounter a better or grander army together in the Indies after their discovery.

[Chapter 48]. The **Great** Threats Made by the Tlaxcalteca Against Our Spaniards

The Indians were fierce and boastful and asked each other, "Who are those mad, insignificant people who threaten without knowing us and dare to enter our land without permission and against our will? Let us not attack immediately but allow them to rest. We have time to capture and tie them up. Let us send them food, for they are hungry, so they

148. Molina, 158v; *xaualli* or *afeite tal*, "a kind of body paint."
149. LdeG uses *latón,* "brass"; however, copper rather than a brass alloy was used in Mesoamerican metallurgy.

cannot say that we captured them because they were hungry and tired." They then sent them three hundred turkeys and two hundred baskets of centli rolls,[150] which is their usual bread, weighing more than one hundred arrobas. This afforded the Spaniards great nourishment and relief, given their need.

Shortly thereafter, they said, "Let us attack since they must have already eaten. We shall eat them, and thus they will pay us for our turkeys and bread. We will find out who sent them here; if Moteuczoma, let him free them, but if they did so on their own daring, they shall pay for it." These threats and empty statements they uttered among themselves, seeing so few Spaniards before them and not yet knowing their strength and courage.

The four captains later sent to the camp up to two thousand of their most courageous men and seasoned soldiers to capture the Spaniards without injury. If the Spaniards took up arms and defended themselves, the Indians should either tie them up, bringing them back by force, or kill them. However, the Indians protested, arguing it would earn them little honor to attack so few men. The two thousand Indians crossed the ravine and boldly reached the tower. The horsemen charged, followed by the infantry. In the first assault, the Spaniards showed the Indians how well iron swords could cut; in the second, they showed them how worthy were those few Spaniards whom they had just insulted; and in the third, the men who were supposed to be seized graciously set them to flight. None escaped, save for those who found a passage across the ravine.

Then the rest of the Indians ran in great uproar to our Spaniards' camp, and many entered without our men being able to stop them. They wrestled and stabbed at the Spaniards, who took a long time in killing and driving off those who had jumped the palisade and assailed them from there. [LdeG: The Spaniards fought them for more than four hours before they could clear some space between the palisade and the enemy.] But the Indians slackened upon seeing their men's gaping wounds and the number of dead. (f. 37) They realized they were killing none of their opponents, although they did not cease to attack until late in the day, when they withdrew. Cortés and his men were pleased, since they were tired from killing Indians. That night our people were more joyful than afraid [LdeG: since they knew that] the Indians do not fight after dark. So they rested and slept easier than before, although they remained vigilant in their quarters, with many watchmen and spies about. Although the Indians lost many of their men, they did not consider themselves

150. Since the Nahuas did not have leavened bread, the reference is likely to some sort of food prepared with maize meal.

defeated, as they later proved. It was impossible to know how many men had died, since neither our people nor the Indians kept a tally.

The next morning Cortés went to pillage the countryside as before, leaving half his men to guard the camp. He departed before dawn so as not to be noticed before causing the damage. He burned more than ten towns and plundered one with three thousand houses where there were few warriors, since they were still at their camp. The people who were inside fought back, and Cortés killed many of them. He then set the town on fire, and, little harmed, returned to camp in great haste at noon because the enemy was marching full speed to attack and plunder the camp. They boisterously brought food as the day before, but although they attacked, fighting for five hours, they were unable to kill a single Spaniard. Countless men died on their side, as they were packed together and the artillery mowed them down. The victory was ours, theirs the struggle. They believed the Spaniards enchanted, since their arrows did not hurt them.

The next day their lords and captain sent Cortés three sorts of gifts. The people who brought them said, "My lord, here are five slaves in case you are fierce gods who eat flesh and blood; eat these, and we will bring you more. If you are good gods, here are incense and feathers. If you are men, take these birds, bread, and cherries." Cortés told them he and his men were mortal beings, neither more nor less than they. He asked why they told lies and flattered him, while he always spoke truthfully to them. He added that he wished to be their friend and that they should not be angry or obstinate in fighting, or they would always receive great harm. Moreover, he said they could see how many Indians had already been killed without the death of a single Spaniard, and then sent them away. However, this did not deter over thirty thousand of their men from returning to our camp to test their mettle against our people as before, but they were injured as always.

It should be known that, although the first day the entire army came as one unit to fight our camp, the following days they did not attack in the same manner, but rather each quarter came separately so as to distribute the toil and damage among everyone and not to obstruct one another in a large crowd. (f. 37v) Only a few fought in a small space, and for this reason the combat and battles were harsher, since each lineage tried to act more bravely than the others in order to gain honor by killing or capturing a Spaniard. They thought the death or imprisonment of a single Spaniard a worthy exchange for all their shame and injuries. Their gifting and fighting should be considered as well, because not only in the course of the aforementioned days, but also throughout the fifteen or more days the Spaniards were there, not an hour of fighting passed with-

out the Indians bringing them tortillas, turkeys, and cherries. However, they did not intend to feed them but to assess the damage they caused and our men's mood or fear. [LdeG: The Spaniards did not comprehend this.] The Tlaxcalteca always said that it was not they who fought, but some Otomi scoundrels who wandered about without a leader or ruler, as they belonged to independent towns located behind the mountains. **They were free people of the highlands, courageous like the Arabs in Africa, who fight naked with bow and arrow, and they are therefore true and native Chichimeca**[151] **who never live in settlements but among the crags, mountains, and highlands. Thus, our friends showed us the [Otomi's] dwellings, pointing to them with their finger[s].**

[Chapter 49]. How Cortés Cut Off the Hands of Fifty Spies

After the Spaniards were given gifts as gods on the sixth of September, the following day up to fifty Tlaxcalteca, honorable men according to their custom, came to the camp. They gave Cortés much bread, cherries, and turkeys, which they brought as everyday food. They asked him how the Spaniards were doing, what they wanted to do, and if they needed anything. Then they wandered throughout the camp, looking at the clothing and weapons from Spain, the horses, and the artillery. They played dumb and feigned astonishment, but their only motive was to spy, although in truth they were quite bewildered.

Then Cortés was approached by **a friend and captain called** Teuctli[152] from Cempoala, who was **astute and** experienced and had been brought up in war since childhood. He told [Cortés] that the Tlaxcalteca were suspect because they stared too much at the entrances and exits and the camp's strength and weaknesses, and that he should find out whether those scoundrels were spies. Cortés thanked him for the fair warning, marveling that neither he nor any Spaniard had noticed **that warning** in all the days the enemy Indians came to and from camp carrying food, whereas the captain from Cempoala had caught on. It was not because the Indian was sharper, more prudent, or wiser than the Spaniards; rather, it was because he saw and heard how the Tlaxcalteca mingled and spoke with the people of Iztacmixtitlan in order to elicit from them little by little what they wanted to know. (f. 38) And so Cortés learned they had not come for his benefit, but to spy.

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151. Chichimeca were considered to be nonsedentary peoples who lived on the periphery of settled, complex populations.

152. [LdeG: Teuch]. C.'s signature spelling of this term is *teuhctli*, "lord" (teuctli hereinafter).

Then Cortés ordered the capture of whichever [Tlaxcalteca] had stayed away from his party and was most at hand. [One of them] was brought secretly to where no one could see him. There, Cortés interrogated him with the help of Marina and Aguilar; after an hour, he confessed he was a spy and that he had come to see and observe the passages and points where they could better harm Cortés and burn the Spaniards' huts. He also said that because they had tried their luck at all times during daylight, and nothing was accomplished that suited their objectives, reputation, or the ancient glory they enjoyed as warriors, they planned to come at night hoping to have better fortune and so their people would not fear the Spaniards or the horses, stabbings, and the devastation of gunfire in the dark. He added that Xicotencatl, their captain general, was ready with many thousands of warriors behind some hills in a neighboring valley, close to camp.

After Cortés heard this confession, he then had another four or five men captured separately, and they similarly confessed that they and all who came in their company were spies, saying the same thing as the first, almost to a word. Therefore, because of their statements, Cortés apprehended all fifty and had their hands cut off on the spot. He then sent them back to their army, threatening the same to all spies whom he captured, and to tell whoever sent them that whenever they came, whether by day or by night, they would know who the Spaniards were. The Indians were terrified and frightened to see the hands of their spies severed, which was new to them. They believed that our people had a spirit that could read their minds. Departing as best they could in order not to have their hands severed, they took the provisions they had brought for the army so their enemies would not benefit from them.

[Chapter 50]. Moteuczoma's Embassy to Cortés

After the spies left, the Spaniards in our camp saw a huge crowd of people led by Xicotencatl coming over the hill. Since it was almost night, Cortés decided to go to them rather than wait in order to prevent their setting fire to the huts on the first charge, as they planned. If they did so, the Spaniards might not escape from the fire or from falling into their enemies' hands. He also wanted them to fear the wounds by seeing them, not merely by hearing about them. And so he ordered almost all his men into formation, to put harnesses with bells on the horses, and to head toward the place where they had seen their enemies. But the natives did not risk waiting for him, having seen their spies' hands severed and hearing the strange noise of the bells. Our men followed them at night

for two hours through numerous maize fields, killing many in the chase and returning victorious to camp.

At this point, six very prominent Mexica lords arrived at camp, along with up to two hundred servants. They brought Cortés a gift of one thousand cotton garments, some feather items, and 1,000 gold castellanos. They came on behalf of Moteuczoma to say that he wanted to be friends with the emperor, Cortés, and the Spaniards. (f. 38v) Moteuczoma asked Cortés to state how much yearly tribute he wanted in gold, silver, pearls, **precious** stones, slaves, clothing, or other goods from his kingdoms, offering to pay it always and without fail on the condition that the men who were there with Cortés not go to Mexico. He clarified that he asked this not to keep them from entering his land, but because it was very sterile and rugged. He would be distressed to see such valiant and honorable men suffer toil and want in his kingdoms without his being able to prevent it.

Cortés thanked them for their visit and Moteuczoma's offer to the emperor and king of Castile. He asked them to remain with him in order to witness the outcome of the war and to carry to Mexico news of the victory and slaughter that he and his companions would carry out among their lord Moteuczoma's worst enemies. Afterward, Cortés fell ill with fever, which kept him from ransacking the countryside, pillaging, burning, or inflicting other damage to the enemy. He took care to hold only the fort against the crowds and throngs of Indians who came to yell and skirmish, for this was a usual occurrence, as were the cherries and food they brought daily, always claiming as an excuse that it was not the Tlaxcalteca who gave them trouble but some Otomi scoundrels who refused to do their bidding. However, neither the skirmishes nor the Indians' fury were as great as before.

Cortés purged himself with a handful of pills he had brought from Cuba. Splitting five pieces, he swallowed them at night when people usually take such remedies. The next day, before he relieved himself, it happened that three large squadrons of natives attacked the camp, either because they knew he was sick or thought the Spaniards dared not come out those days due to fear. When Cortés was informed of the attack, disregarding the purgative, he rode his horse and led his men into battle. He fought the enemy all day until evening, making them retreat a great stretch, and returned to camp. The purgative took effect the next day, as if he had only taken it then. I do not claim this as a miracle, but solely to relate what transpired and that Cortés endured much toil and harm and was always the first to engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Not only did he fight well with his hands **(**a rare occurrence**),** he also had good judgment **and much prudence** in everything he did. Having purged

himself and rested on those days, like any other soldier he stood watch at night when his turn came, as was his custom. He was not diminished because of it, nor any less beloved by the men who accompanied him; **rather, he was very much respected.**

[Chapter 51]. How Cortés Captured Zimpancinco,[153] a Very Large City **Subject to Tlaxcala**

One night Cortés climbed the tower and looking first in one direction and then another saw at four leagues' distance columns of smoke rising from a forest and some boulders by a mountain range. Thinking there were many people there, he said nothing. He ordered two hundred Spaniards and some Indian friends to follow him, leaving the rest to protect the camp. At three or four at night he traveled toward the mountains, guessing his way since it was very dark. He had not yet traveled a league when the horses experienced a kind of violent cramp that brought them to the ground without being able to move. When the first horse fell and Cortés was informed, he sent it and its (f. 39) rider back to camp. Then the next horse fell, and he gave the same order. When the third or fourth fell, his companions began to retreat, saying this was a bad sign, and it would be better to return or wait until dawn so they could see their way.

Cortés told them not to pay attention to omens; that God, whose cause they championed, ruled over nature and would not abandon their expedition. He imagined that as a result they would reap a great benefit that night, and that it was the devil who placed those obstacles in their way to obstruct them. Just as he spoke, his horse fell. They then halted and conferred on the best course of action. They decided to return the fallen horses to camp and to proceed on their way, leading the rest by the reins. The horses quickly recovered, although it was never known why they fell. **Our Indian friends said that the natives from those parts were great sorcerers who used the devil's tricks against the Spaniards, although this was of little benefit to them.**

The Spaniards traveled until they lost the location of the boulders and came on stony ground [LdeG: and] ravines, where they could have easily perished. After such a bad experience that made their hair stand on end, they discerned a dim light. They made their way toward it and found a house where there were two women, who, along with two men

153. Tzompantzinco (and hereinafter) in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 109–10, and Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (Stanford, 1967), 10, 17.

they encountered, guided and brought them to the boulders where they had seen the smoke. Before dawn they fell upon a cluster of **houses resembling a hamlet**, killing many people but without setting fire to them so as not to delay or be noticed, since [Cortés] had been told there were large settlements nearby.

From there, Cortés entered Tzompantzinco, a town of twenty thousand households, as was later shown by a tally carried out by Cortés. Caught unaware, the townspeople were killed in a surprise attack before arising. They came naked into the street to see why there was so much weeping. At first many died, but because they did not resist, Cortés ordered his men not to kill them or take any of their women or clothing. The inhabitants' fear was so great that they fled as fast as they could, the father not worrying about his son or the husband his wife, house, or property. The Spaniards made signs of peace, [LdeG: saying] they should not fear or run from them; and there was no more fleeing or harm done.

After sunrise, the town pacified, Cortés went to high ground to survey the countryside and saw a very large settlement. On asking whose it was, they told him it was Tlaxcala and its hamlets. He called the Spaniards and stated, "See, what is the point of killing the people here when there are so many enemies there?" Without doing any further harm to the town, he went to a pleasant fountain located **in the middle of the square.** There came the **most honorable** principales who governed the town, along with over four thousand unarmed people with much food. They implored Cortés not to hurt them anymore, thanking him for causing them so little damage and saying they wished to serve and obey him and be his loyal friends, **as they later became**. (f. 39v) They not only offered to maintain his friendship from then on, but to convince the lords of Tlaxcala and others to do the same. He reminded them they had fought many times against him, while still bringing him food, but [Cortés] forgave them and received them in friendship and in the service of the emperor. With this, he left and returned to camp very happy with such a good outcome after so bad a beginning, as was the incident with the horses, saying "Do not curse the day until it is over." He returned confident that the people of Tzompantzinco would convince the Tlaxcalteca to lay down their arms and become friends of the Spaniards. Therefore, he commanded that from then on no one harm or bother any Indian whatsoever. He even told his men he believed that, with the help of God, they had put an end to the war in the province **of Tzompantzinco** that same day.

[Chapter 52]. On the Wish by Some Spaniards to Abandon the Budding War

When Cortés returned joyfully to camp, as I said before, he found his companions somewhat frightened, **sad, and worried**, since they thought a disaster **or disgrace** might have befallen him because he had sent the horses back. But when they saw him arrive victorious and healthy, their pleasure knew no bounds. In truth, many among his troops were dejected and apathetic and wanted to turn back to the coast, as some had often begged Cortés to do. Above all, they wanted [to leave] after having seen such a great land so full and congested with people who were well armed and had no desire for them to stay, for they were so few, inland and **in the middle of it, and** so far from shore, without hope **or manner** of relief. **Such things gave the Spaniards great sorrow, as they would be lost in any case, fearing a mutiny.** Some of the men discussed among themselves that it would be good and necessary to speak with **Captain** Cortés and even demand that he not press ahead **with his designs** but return to Veracruz, where little by little they would have contact with the Indians and proceed according to the circumstances. **In the meantime**, Cortés could recruit and bring together more Spaniards and horses, which were **most** necessary for war.

Cortés paid little mind **to all they imagined**, even when some of his men secretly pleaded with him to put an end to the situation, until one night upon leaving the tower where he slept to request candles **and sentries**, he heard some loud voices in one of the neighboring huts. He listened to what some of his company were saying, "If the captain wishes to act like a madman and go where he will be killed, let him go alone; let's not follow him." Cortés then called two of his friends as witnesses and told them to note what those men were saying, since he who dared say it, would dare do it. (f. 40) He heard others in the corrals and in cliques say they would not follow Cortés but turn back while there was still time, because it would turn out to be a case like that of Pedro Carbonerote, who died along with all his troops after advancing into Moorish lands.[154] Cortés greatly resented hearing such talk and wished to reprehend and even punish those who spoke. However, seeing that it was not a good **but a dangerous** situation, he decided to win them over

154. LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 112, notes that a Pedro Carbonero was a man of legend in Spanish accounts regarding his feats in battle in fifteenth-century Granada. Cortés referred to the incident in his second letter: "Indeed, I heard it whispered, and almost spoken out loud that I was, that I was Pedro Carbonero to have led them into this place from which they could never escape." In his *Letters from Mexico*, trans. Anthony Pagden (New Haven, 1986), 63.

and addressed them all together in the following manner, **and in this way, he said:**

[Chapter 53]. **Cortés's Oration to His Soldiers.** On the Address **Captain Hernando** Cortés Gave to All His Soldiers

Lords and Friends,

I have chosen you as my companions, and you have chosen me as your captain for the service of God **our Lord** and the growth of His holy **Catholic** faith, for the service of our **good** king **and lord**, and even for our own benefit. As you know, until now I have not failed or angered you, nor, in truth, have you failed or angered me. However, I now feel that some of you have weakened and have little desire to end the war in which we are involved. God willing, the war has already ended, or at least we know the extent of the damage it may inflict on us. You have already seen some of the good we will receive from it, although what you will see and obtain is incomparably much more, and its greatness exceeds our comprehension and words. My companions, do not be afraid to come and stay with me, for Spaniards have never feared death in these new lands **or in the world** they have discovered and conquered by their virtue, effort, and ability. **I do not believe that you wish to leave and abandon me**. May God never will it, nor I or anyone think or say that my **good and loyal** Spaniards have ever feared or disobeyed their captain. There is no way to turn one's back on the enemy that does not seem a flight **or an affront**. There is no flight, or, if you prefer, retreat, that does not cause a man endless grief, shame, or hunger, the loss of friends, property, and weapons, and death, which may be the worst fate of all, but not the most permanent, since infamy is eternal.

If we leave this land, this war, this course we have begun, and turn back, as some **believe and** wish we should, must we tarry, idle and lost? No, certainly not. You will say that it is not the character of our Spanish nation to do so in war and when our honor is at stake, for men act according to their nature.[155] Do you think perhaps that you will find fewer people poorly armed in other lands not so far from the sea? **Companions**, do not go looking for trouble,[156] for, as they say, no matter our destination, we will encounter three leagues of road much worse than the one we now travel. Therefore, let us give **infinite** thanks

155. LdeG uses the Spanish saying, *pues adónde va el buey que no are?* "where can the ox go without having to draw the plow?"

156. From the Spanish saying, *Andáis buscando cinco pies al gato,* "You complicate matters by looking for a cat's fifth leg."

to God **because He has not forsaken us in the past, maintaining us always in health and with sustenance, and because through His divine goodness** (f. 40v) since our arrival in this land we have not lacked **and will never lack** food, friends, riches, or honor.

You know **and have seen** that the men of this **land** take you to be more than men and immortal, and even gods, if such a statement can be made. Although they **are so many that they** cannot count their number, and so well armed, as you contend, they have not been able to kill even one of us. As to weapons, what more can you ask of theirs, since they are not tipped with poisonous herbs **or venom, as is customary in places such** as Cartagena and Veragua and for the Caribs **on the islands we have seen**, which have caused many Spaniards a very painful death? For this reason alone, you do not need **and it will not be necessary** to seek others with whom to fight. I grant you that the sea is very far, and no Spaniard in the Indies has traveled farther inland **than we have**, a distance of fifty leagues. No one has done or deserved more than you, since **the famous city of** Mexico, the residence of **the great emperor** Moteuczoma, who has sent us many ambassadors and whose riches you have heard so much about, is less than twenty leagues from here. As you see, most of the distance has already been covered. If we reach it, as I hope in God we do, we will win not only for our **lord** [LdeG: emperor] and natural king a land rich **in gold and silver**, infinite grand kingdoms, and innumerable vassals, but we will win for ourselves great wealth—gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, and other goods. Even without all this, we will win the greatest honor and glory our times have seen, and not only our nation, but no other since. The more important the king we seek, the more extensive his lands will be, and the more enemies we encounter, the more glory we will gain. Have you not heard the saying, "The more Moors, the greater the spoils?" Moreover, as good **and faithful** Christians, we are obliged to spread and exalt our holy Catholic faith, as we began by uprooting the great idolatry and blasphemy against God **our Lord** and by abolishing their sacrifices and the eating of human flesh, which are wholly against nature yet so common **among these Indians, eliminating not only these sins**, but many others I do not mention due to their baseness.

Therefore, do not fear or harbor any doubts about the great victory **that God through His great mercy will grant us. As you know, my companions**, most of our work is finished, for you **and I** defeated the people of Tabasco and, more recently, one hundred and fifty thousand Tlaxcalteca, who are reputed to be lion slayers, **Indians who are said to be the bravest of these nations since the time of their ancestors.** With God's help and through your own efforts, you will defeat all those

remaining, who should not be many in number **now**, as well as the Colhuaque, who are no better than the rest. **And since until now, we are still standing**, let us not **falter or** faint, **for** if you follow me **with the great trust of all our friends and companions, God will be with us. Amen.**

Everyone was satisfied with **the good Captain** Cortés's reasoning; those who wavered **and complained truly** gained strength **and spirit,** (f. 41) **which they would not lack in the campaign required by their king and lord. Therefore**, those who were brave doubled their resolve and those who bore ill will toward Cortés **then** began to respect him. In sum, from then on he was **much more** beloved by all the Spaniards in his army. The words and advice in his oration were necessary **because some were very determined to return to the sea and could mutiny, which in this case would be their demise,** and because some, wishing to turn back, might plan a mutiny that would oblige them to return to the sea. It would be as if they had accomplished nothing **from all the troubles they had endured until then. In the end, they calmed down and regained their great friendship with the captain.**

[Chapter 54]. How **Captain** Xicotencatl Came as Ambassador of Tlaxcala to Cortés's Camp

The men had not fully dispersed and were still discussing what was said above, when Xicotencatl, captain general in war, entered Cortés's camp accompanied by fifty noble and honorable principales. **When** Cortés approached, they greeted one another **very courteously**, each following the custom **and usage** of his own land. When seated, Xicotencatl told Cortés that he came on his behalf and that of Maxixca**tzin**, the other main lord of that province, and on behalf of many others he mentioned, **Tlehuexollotzin**[157] **and Citlalpopocatzin**, and the entire republic of Tlaxcala. He begged [Cortés] to welcome them into his friendship, to offer themselves to his king, and to ask forgiveness for having taken up weapons against him and his companions without knowing who they were or what they sought in their lands. If [the Tlaxcalteca] had fought against them, it was because they were foreigners and men of a different appearance **and nation**, the likes of which they had never seen, and also because it was feared they had come from Moteuczoma, their ancient and

157. Tlehuexolotzin (and hereinafter). For background on the historiography of knowledge about the names of all four Tlaxcalteca rulers, which, apparently, were not determined for certain until the eighteenth century, see Gibson, *Tlaxcala*, 5, 13–14.

eternal enemy, since his servants and vassals were in their company. The Tlaxcalteca also feared that the Spaniards wished to fight them and take away the freedom they had enjoyed from time immemorial. To conserve it in the manner of their ancestors, they had shed much blood, lost many people and properties, and suffered other ills and misadventures. In particular, one of their greater sufferings was their own nakedness: since theirs was a cold land where cotton could not be cultivated, they were forced to remain naked as the day they were born, or dress in **maguey leaves or** metl. Furthermore, they did not have salt, without which no dish has flavor or good taste. Thus, the Tlaxcalteca lacked salt and cotton, two items essential for human existence, which Moteuczoma and other neighboring enemies had. As the Tlaxcalteca did not possess enough gold, precious stones, or other valuable goods with which to barter, they often had to sell themselves in order to purchase them. The Tlaxcalteca would not lack these items if they agreed to become subjects and vassals of **the great** Moteuczoma, but they would rather die before stooping to such dishonor and wickedness, since they could defend themselves against his might as had (f. 41v) their fathers and grandfathers against that of Moteuczoma's father and grandfather. They were lords as great as Moteuczoma now was, and had subjugated and tyrannized all the lands. The Tlaxcalteca then attempted to defend themselves against the Spaniards, but could not, even though they let loose all their forces on them day and night without success, finding them strong and invincible. Therefore, accepting their fate, they would rather be [the Spaniards'] subjects than anyone else's, for the Cempoalteca told them that [the Spaniards] were good and mighty, had not come to do harm, and, [moreover,] as they found out, were very valiant and fortunate in war and battle. For these two reasons, they trusted that, under the Spaniards, their freedoms would be less curtailed, their persons and wives more respected, and their houses and fields left intact and, if attacked, defended. At the end of his address, he tearfully implored Cortés to consider how Tlaxcala had never before bowed to any king or lord nor allowed any other man ever born to rule there, save for [Cortés], whom they had called and asked.

Cortés's joy over this ambassador and his embassy could not be measured. Besides having the honor of such a great **captain** and lord come to his tent to humble himself, it was wondrous to have as friend and subject that city and province and conclude the war to the great satisfaction of his men while enjoying great fame and reputation among the Indians. Therefore, Cortés responded happily and graciously, although he blamed Xicotencatl **always** for the damage that Cortés's army had sustained in his land and for not listening to Cortés by allowing the Spaniards to enter in peace, as he had requested and demanded through the Cempoalteca

messengers that he sent from Zacatlan. Cortés forgave him for the two horses they had killed, for their assaults, for the lies they told while fighting and blaming others, and for having called him to their town in order to ambush and kill him without risk on the road, instead of defying him first like the brave men they were. Cortés received Xicotencatl's promise to serve and obey the [Spanish] emperor and sent him away after promising to meet him soon in Tlaxcala, saying he did not leave immediately due to his high regard for Moteuczoma's servants.

[Chapter 55]. The Reception and Service Given Our **Spaniards** in **the Great City of** Tlaxcala

The Mexica ambassadors were exceedingly troubled by the arrival of **Captain General** Xicotencatl at the Spanish camp and by the pledge he made before Cortés to his king of his person, people, and properties. They told Cortés that he should not believe any of it or trust Xicotencatl's words, as they were all subterfuge, lies, and betrayal in order to seize him effortlessly in the city behind closed doors. Cortés told them that, even if it were all true, he had decided to go there, as he feared the Tlaxcalteca less in their town than in an open field. When they learned of his answer and resolve, they beseeched Cortés to let one of them go to Mexico and tell Moteuczoma what was taking place, saying he should not leave camp before receiving an answer from the main messenger, who would return without fail within six days. (f. 42) Cortés gave them leave and waited there to hear the news, because in truth he dared not trust the Tlaxcalteca without any assurances. In the meantime, many Tlaxcalteca came and went to the camp, some with turkeys, others with bread, yet others with cherries, peppers, or **chiles and** ***tamales***, which are like bread rolls, all given freely and with a happy countenance while begging Cortés to come with them to their homes. The Mexica [messenger] came back as promised on the sixth day, bringing Cortés **as gifts** ten valuable well-crafted gold pieces and jewels, one thousand and five hundred wonderfully woven cotton garments, better **fashioned** than the first one thousand garments given as gifts. On Moteuczoma's behalf, he repeatedly pleaded with Cortés not to **take that road and** face danger by trusting the Tlaxcalteca, who were poor and would steal the gifts he had received, killing him only on account of his dealings with Moteuczoma. The heads and lords of Tlaxcala also came forth to plead with Cortés to be kind enough to come with them to their city, where he would be **well** received, provided for, and lodged, as they were embarrassed to have such people sleep in wretched huts. If Cortés did not trust them, they said, he could request

any other assurance or hostage, which they would give him; however, they promised and pledged that he would have a safe stay in their town, because they would not break their oath or violate the trust owed their republic, or go against the word of their lords and captains for anything in the world. When Cortés saw the **good** will of those noblemen and new friends—and after the people of Cempoala, whom he held in high esteem, pestered and assured him he should go—he had the porters loaded with equipment, his artillery sent off, and then traveled the six leagues to Tlaxcala as orderly and cautiously as if going into battle. Cortés left crosses and stone landmarks in the tower, in camp, and at every place he had triumphed.

So many people came to greet Cortés on the road and along the streets that they could barely stand. He entered Tlaxcala on the 18th of September **of that year**, making his quarters at the great temple, which had many good chambers for all the Spaniards, and he placed his Indian friends in other quarters. He also drew some boundaries and placed markers to delimit where the men could go without grave sanctions and instructed them not to take anything other than what was offered. They were very compliant as they asked permission, even to visit a brook only a stone's throw from the temple. The Spanish troops **rejoiced in** the many pleasures granted by the Tlaxcalteca lords and in the deference given Cortés. The lords provided them with everything they needed for their sustenance; many gave the Spaniards their daughters as a sign of true friendship, so they would bear them **Spaniards,** (f. 42v) strong men issued from brave males, so they would have issue for war, or perhaps they gave them the women as was their custom, or only to please them. Our Spaniards were satisfied with the place and with their dealings with its people. They rested there for twenty days, during which time they endeavored to learn **about the land**, the particulars of the republic, the secrets of the land, and what news they could gather about Moteuczoma.

[Chapter 56]. **An Account** About Tlaxcala, **Its Lifeways, and the Governance of the Republic**

Tlaxcala means "Baked Bread" or "House Made of Bread,"[158] because much more centli is harvested there than in its surroundings; either the city gave its name to the province, or vice versa. They say that this city was first called Texcallan,[159] which means "House **or Place** of the Crag."

158. A more literal translation of Tlaxcallan in Nahuatl would be "Place of Tortillas."
159. LdeG refers to *texcalla*, which is glossed in Molina, 112r, as a "rocky, craggy place."

A very large town, it is near the banks of a river that has its source in **the** Atlancatepec **Mountains** and irrigates most of the province, and then flows into the South Sea[160] near Zacatullan. The town has four quarters, called Tepeticpac, Ocotelulco, Tizatlan, and Quiauixtlan. The first is located on a large hill, which is like a mountain ridge, more than half a league from the river, and is called Tepeticpac, **which means "Hilltop," and is where Tlehuexolotzin has his houses.** This was the first settlement in the region, built on high ground because of the wars **with bordering towns, and is sparsely populated.** The other quarter is on the lower bank of **the river or** the river's edge, and since **when it was founded** there were pine trees it was called Ocotelulco, which means "Pine Forest." This was the best and most populated part of the city, where there was the main square and marketplace, **which the natives** called *tianquiztli*, and Maxixcatzin has his **palaces and** houses **there.** On a plain above the river, there was **another settlement** called Tizatlan because great amounts of chalk are found there, and it is where Xicotencatl, the **great** captain general of the republic, had his **palace and** residence. The fourth quarter, also on the plain and down toward the river, was called Quiauixtlan because it is a reservoir; **Citlalpopocatzin resided there.** Once the Spaniards took **and populated** it, [LdeG: almost all] was torn down. **The natives were driven away from it, and it was redone in the Spanish style with better buildings and well-proportioned streets.** It has been built again, with much improved streets and stone houses on a plain along **or next to** the river **and two squares.**

It is a republic like Venice, governed by noble and wealthy men. **In these times the Indians grow wealthy there through the production of great quantities of cochinilla,** (f. 43) **which they call *nochiztli*,**[161] **a scarlet dye. The Tlaxcalteca will not obey any lord because they flee from this as if from tyranny.** As I said above, in war they have four captains or colonels, one for each quarter, and one chosen as their general. There are also other lords who serve as captains, but of lesser rank, **or are less valuable** in war**; they are used for ambushes.** They bear the standard at the rear **of the army.** At the end of the skirmish or battle, they implant it **in the ground** for all to see, punishing those who do not stop fighting. They have two arrows, relics from their founders, which are carried into battle by two **of the town's main** lords as captains and brave soldiers. They use the arrows to foretell victory or defeat: they shoot one of them into the first enemy they encounter, and if it kills or wounds they say it

160. Surely the Gulf of Mexico is intended.

161. Molina, 72v, glosses *nocheztli* as "scarlet dye in the rough, which they call cochineal." This dye, obtained from crushed insects on maguey plants, became an important source of revenue for native producers and the crown in central Mexico and Oaxaca.

augurs victory, and if it does not, this means they will lose. They never fail to retrieve the arrow.

This province has twenty-eight **subject** towns, which are inhabited by one hundred and fifty thousand **male** heads of households, **all vassals of Tlaxcala.** They are good natured and are also good and peerless warriors. They are poor, with no riches or enterprise other than centli **or maize,** which is their bread, **although nowadays they produce large quantities of cochineal, a scarlet dye that they exploit** not only for their food but for their clothing, tribute payments, and other vital necessities. They have many sites **and squares** used as markets **where today they carry out large commercial transactions with the Spaniards**, but their major **market** is held [LdeG: often] on weekdays, **and all day Saturday** in the main square of Ocotelulco. This market is so great that **more than** thirty thousand people come on one day to buy and sell, or better put, to barter, as they have no knowledge of minted metal coins. All **necessary** types of clothing, shoes, foodstuffs, and crafted goods are sold in that market, as in ours. There are all kinds of businesses in the market; there are silversmiths, **officials**, feather craftsmen, barbers, **oven-shaped** sweat baths,[162] potters who make very good cups **and vessels,** and their earthenware **and glazed** pottery is as good as that made in Spain. The soil is very fertile, **good** for cultivation of crops and fruit **trees,** and pasture **that they have today for their sustenance.** In the pine groves the grass is so plentiful **and so exuberant** that our Spaniards graze **many** herds of livestock, **both large and small**, which they cannot do so here [in Spain]. **There are great harvests of maize and wheat from large estates.**

A mountain range located two leagues from the city **surrounds the province,** its mountainside a height of two **leagues**, and the entire range covers more than fifteen **leagues**. **Much** snow **falls and** accumulates on this range, which is now called San Bartolomé and was known formerly **by the natives** as Matlalcueie,[163] who was their Goddess of Water. These natives **also** had a God of Wine they called Ome Tochtli, **which means "Two Rabbits,"** for whom they held many drunken revelries, **as the ancients did in Spain for the god Bacchus**. Their greatest idol and main god **was** Camaxtli, also known as Mixcoatl, whose temple was in the Ocotelulco quarter, where in some years they sacrificed (f. 43v) up to eight hundred men **or people to their idols**. They speak three languages in **all the province** of Tlaxcala; **one is** Nahuatl, a noble language which is the major one in all the land of Mexico; the other is that of the Otomi people and is spoken more outside than in the city, **because within the**

162. Nahuatl: *temazcalli*; Molina, 97v.
163. Malinche in Gibson, *Tlaxcala*, 34.

city Nahuatl is the native language; Pinomex is spoken in only one of the quarters, and it is the vulgar language **of the locals**.

There was a public jail, where evildoers were imprisoned for what was held to be sinful. At that time, it happened **and occurred** that a Tlaxcalteca stole some gold from one of the Spaniards. Cortés reported this to **the great Captain** Maxixcatzin who made his inquiry and investigation so diligently that they went [LdeG: to find] the thief in Cholola, a city five leagues distant, bringing him back as a prisoner and surrendering him to Cortés along with the gold, so he would do justice as **it is done** in Spain. Cortés did not want to be a part of any of this and thanked them for their **good** work **in finding him,** and with a town crier who called out his crimes, [the Tlaxcalteca] paraded him through the streets and in the market square. On **an elevation** like a theater, they clubbed **or garroted** him **with a bludgeon**, and it was no small wonder for the Spaniards **to see how fair was the justice of the natives.**

[Chapter 57]. The Tlaxcalteca's Response to **Captain** Cortés on Abandoning Their Idols

Seeing that these natives upheld justice and kept their faith, albeit a diabolical one, whenever Cortés spoke with them he preached through the interpreters, beseeching them to abandon their idols and their cruel and vain **form of** worship, the killing and eating of sacrificed men. He told them that not one of them wished to be killed or eaten like that, no matter how religious or saintly a manner. He asked them to believe in the true Christian God worshipped by the Spaniards, who was the creator of heaven and earth, who made it rain, and who created all the fruits of the land for the use and benefit of mortals. Some responded that they were willing to do so in order to please him, but feared being stoned by their people, while others said it was **a** grave **affront** to **forget and** abandon the faith of their ancestors, **which had been passed down from the time when they settled these lands many centuries ago**. Indeed, it would be their ruin. Others said that in time they would become Christians after seeing the ways of **our** faith and understanding the reasons, once they had better knowledge of the **lifeways**, laws, customs, and nature of the Spaniards. They had already observed in warfare that they were invincible men and that their **true** God assisted them **well**. Cortés promised he would soon appoint someone to teach them the doctrine, and then they would see how much better it was **to worship the one almighty God** and the great fruits and joy they would **receive and** feel **in their souls** if they accepted (f. 44) his friendly counsel. Since Cortés could do nothing at that time

given his **great** urgency to go to Mexico, he asked them to kindly allow him to convert the temple where he was lodged into a church, so that he and his men could pray and conduct their **holy** ceremonies **in praise of our lord God,** and [the townspeople] should come to watch. **Thus,** the natives **of their own will and accord** gave the Spaniards leave to engage in their devotions and sacrifice**, inspiring both wonder and fright,** especially when mass was said every day **once Cortés arrived with his army.** Many came to see the crosses and images of our saints placed **on their altars**, in Cortés's temple and **many** others, and in **small** towers. Some natives left **their own people** to live with the Spaniards, with whom all the Tlaxcalteca were friendly. As lord, the most **loyal** friend was **Lord** Maxixcat**zin, who never renounced his friendship with Cortés** nor ever grew tired **or weary** of seeing and listening to the Spaniards, **and so today the Tlaxcalteca have become even more accustomed to them.**

[Chapter 58]. On the **Great Ancient** Enmity **that Existed** Between the Mexica and the Tlaxcalteca

When **Cortés and** the Spaniards realized that the Tlaxcalteca spoke willingly and in good faith, they asked about **the great lord** Moteuczoma, his wealth, and his standing as lord **and monarch of the world.** As knowledgeable men they praised him greatly, asserting that over the last ninety or one hundred years they had waged a **bloody** war against Moteuczoma and his father Axayaca**tzin**, and against his uncles, [LdeG: grandfather], **great-grandfathers, and relatives.** According to everyone, Moteuczoma's gold, silver, and all his other treasures and riches were greater than they could estimate. His kingdom extended throughout all the land known to them, and he could gather two or three hundred thousand men for a single battle, and even twice that number if he so desired, **a thing of wonder**. They were witness to this, having fought against him many times. The Tlaxcalteca praised Moteuczoma so insistently, in particular Maxixcatzin, who said he did not wish the Spaniards to endanger themselves before **enemies such as** the Colhuaque, that many Spaniards grew suspicious. But Cortés told them that because of all he heard he was determined to see Moteuczoma in Mexico. Certain that Moteuczoma would grant him any wish, Cortés told [the Tlaxcalteca] to decide what they wanted him to negotiate on their behalf, since he was indebted to them. They asked that they be granted license to acquire cotton and salt, which **for many years** they had not **tasted or** eaten, as they had lacked both through the years (f. 44v) due to their continuous wars **against the Colhuaque**, except for those who **secretly and clandestinely** purchased

these items. **These *pochteca* are like merchants who exchanged slaves for salt and cotton** clandestinely and sold them as if worth their weight in gold to **some of** their neighboring friends **in the region. But if** Moteuczoma **found out, he** would kill anyone who did so **as traitors, particularly** if these goods were smuggled out of his dominions.

When Cortés asked the Tlaxcalteca the reason for so many troubles and wars and their wretched relations with Moteuczoma, they replied that theirs was an ancient enmity **and hatred, existing for many years because [Moteuczoma] wished to subject them to the royal crown. They had always lived in freedom, exempt from tribute, and had never submitted to any king or lord but remained untamed and free to this day. They added that ever since they had begun waging war their men always trained in battles where captives were taken, or as I said, ransomed for salt, mantas, cotton, and other necessities. Because of Tlaxcala's proximity to Moteuczoma's kingdom, many robust youths—Mexica, Colhuaque, and others—came to test their strength in warfare, emerging as brave men who served as great lords and captains in great wars. The Mexica showed their mettle and proved victorious not only on the boundaries of Tlaxcala, but also in Pánuco, Apantla, and Tehuantepec, a place on the road to Guatemala, where they obtained *cacao*, their lord's treasured drink. The Tlaxcalteca**[164] **even went to the coast of the South Sea, and had their captains in foreign lands who endeavored to return to their fatherland enriched with gold, precious stones, handsome, colorful headdresses, feathers, and slaves, and their kinsmen would greet them with much rejoicing, festivities, and banquets.** They loved their freedom and exemption from tribute. Nevertheless, the Mexica ambassadors asserted, and Moteuczoma and many others in Mexico later concurred, that this was not so, but for very different reasons. In fact, each party argued in favor of its own rights, justifying its position. One reason [according to the Mexica] was that the Mexica and Colhua youths should train for warfare nearby [in Tlaxcala], not as distant as the frontiers of Pánuco and Tehuantepec, so they could always count on having war captives to sacrifice to their gods. (f. 45) Moteuczoma sent an army to Tlaxcala to seize all the men necessary for the year in order to celebrate festivities and sacrifices. Certainly, if Moteuczoma so wished, he could vanquish and kill them all in genuine warfare; however, since

164. Although the text says "Tlaxcalteca," the rest of the sentence clearly refers to the actions of youths who participated in the flowery wars and the travel of Mexica captains to the South Sea and Tehuantepec. There is no evidence that the Tlaxcalteca sent emissaries or forged alliances with the Zapotec rulers of Tehuantepec, who had sealed an alliance with the Mexica by having one of their lords marry a daughter of Moteuczoma. Therefore, this seems to be a careless error by a copyist, or perhaps by Chimalpahin.

all he wanted was to hunt captives for their gods and mouths, he sent only a few men against them, and therefore the Tlaxcalteca occasionally defeated them. **Captain** Cortés took great pleasure in seeing the grave discord, wars, and conflicts between **these natives**, his new friends **the Tlaxcalteca,** and Moteuczoma, for this favored him, thinking these troubles would allow him to subjugate them all. Therefore, he dealt secretly with one and the other in order to manage the situation completely. In the meantime, many people from Huexotzinco, **a neighboring city** that waged war against us, came and went between Tlaxcala and their city, a republic like Tlaxcala and on such friendly terms with the Tlaxcalteca that it was as if they were one and the same against Moteuczoma, who also took them as prisoners for his slaughters on Mexica temples. The Huexotzinca also offered themselves to Cortés to serve as vassals of the emperor.

[Chapter 59]. The Solemn Reception Given to the Spaniards at **Great** Cholola

Moteuczoma's ambassadors told Cortés that since he still intended to go to Mexico he should take the road to Cholola[165] located five leagues from Tlaxcala, for the townspeople were their friends. There, he could better await their lord's decision on whether he could enter Mexico. They said this to drive him from Tlaxcala, since Moteuczoma was gravely concerned to see such great peace and friendship between the Tlaxcalteca and the Spaniards, fearing that it would result in **some** harmful evil **or** misfortune. To encourage him to leave sooner, they always gave him some gift as bait. But because Cortés wanted to go to Cholola, the Tlaxcalteca were shot through with rage. They said that Moteuczoma was a deceiving tyrant and perjurer, that Cholula was a friend of his, **Moteuczoma,** albeit a disloyal one, and that it might provoke [Cortés] and wage war once inside its walls. Therefore, he should be careful, but if he insisted on going, they would give him an escort of fifty thousand **men**.

The women given **as hostages** to the Spaniards when they first came into the city heard of a scheme orchestrated by one of their four captains to kill [the Spaniards] in Cholola. That captain's sister, who had been given to Pedro de Alvarado, told [Avarado]. Cortés then spoke to the captain and with **flattering** words removed him from his house, suffocating

165. Gerhard, *Guide*, 114, states that Cholola was a major polity located at the base of the eastern slope of Mt. Iztaccihuatl and that it was an important marketplace as well as pilgrimage-religious center. It had originally been affiliated with Tlaxcala, but by 1519 was closely allied with the Mexica.

or garroting him unbeknownst to anyone, without any sound, commotion, or disturbance. Thus, there was (f. 45v) no scandal whatsoever, and the plot was foiled. It was **a** wondrous **thing** that Tlaxcala did not revolt after **having seen** the death of such a leading lord of the republic. It was even investigated later and discovered that in truth Moteuczoma had sent more than thirty thousand soldiers to Cholola, garrisoned at a distance of two leagues. The streets were barricaded to the rooftops with many stones; they closed the main road, making another one. This new road had numerous pits in which they placed many **stakes and sharp** sticks, so **the Christians** could not pass without their horses being impaled. These pits were covered with sand to hide them, and could not be detected upon approach. **Captain Cortés was horrified by the cunning they exhibited in war, and they knew other tactics.** Cortés believed this because the Chololteca had not come or sent anyone to see or offer himself to him, as their neighbors, the Huexotzinca, had done. On the advice of the Tlaxcalteca, Cortés sent messengers to Cholola to summon their lords and captains **(particularly Tequanhuehuetzin,**[166] **the principal lord of that city, and many other men).** They would not come, but sent two or three men with the excuse that they were sick **or had taken ill,** and to see what he wanted. The Tlaxcalteca said that those captains seemed indeed to be so unfortunate that Cortés should not leave until they arrived. Cortés then sent the same messengers **a second time** with the written order that if the captains did not come by the third day he would regard them as rebels and enemies and punish them harshly. On the next day, many lords and captains from Cholola came to excuse themselves because, as the Tlaxcalteca were their enemies, they would not be safe in their town, and because they knew Cortés had been told many evil things about them. However, he should not believe the Tlaxcalteca because they were false and cruel. Instead, he should come to their city to see that the accusations were not true, for they were good and loyal men. The Chololteca then pledged to serve and pay him tribute as his subjects, and Cortés had their words recorded by interpreters and an escribano.

When Cortés bid them farewell, all **of Tlaxcala** wept to see him leave, especially **Captain** Maxixcatzin, **who had a great affection for him. More than** one hundred thousand soldiers left with him, along with many merchants to barter for salt, mantas, **and other necessities**. Cortés ordered the one hundred thousand **men** to remain apart from his own. He did not reach Cholola that day but instead camped by a brook, where many **distinguished** people from the city came to implore that he, **the captain**, not allow the Tlaxcalteca to injure them or damage their

166. Tequanhuehuetzin (and hereinafter).

lands. Therefore, Cortés ordered home all but five or six thousand Tlaxcalteca against their will. They did not want to leave him in danger, as they regarded him a friend, and warned him to beware of those evil **and treacherous** people (f. 46) who were not warriors but merchants, men who displayed one heart but had another.

The following morning, our Spaniards reached Cholola, and more than ten thousand of its citizens came forth to greet them in squadrons, many bearing bread, fowl, and flowers, each squadron going before Cortés to bid him welcome and then clearing the way for the next. As the Spaniards entered the city, **according to its large size,** an **endless** multitude came to greet them as they filed in. The people were **frightened to see the Spaniards as they marched in formation and** amazed to see their and their horses' appearance. Then, all their religious, priests, and idol keepers followed in great numbers, dressed in white surplice-like garments, some closed in front with arm openings and cotton fringe at the hem. Some played bugles **and battle fifes**, others played drums **that make great boisterous noises at their festivities.** Others carried lighted censers, and others brought out idols under canopies, **as if in a procession**, all singing according to their custom **and fashion.** They came before Cortés and the other Spaniards and censed them in great **and marvelous** pomp and solemnity with a certain kind of resin, or copalli, that smells like frankincense. The Spaniards were then brought into the city, lodged in a **great** house **and palace** with plenty of room, and that night each was given a turkey. **On Cortés's orders and of their own honorable accord, the brave lord Iztacmixtitlan and** the friends from Tlaxcala and Cempoala were posted as sentries.

[Chapter 60]. How the Chololteca Attempted to **Betray and** Murder the Spaniards

Cortés spent the night fully alert and vigilant because, as they went along the road and entered the city, they saw signs of what they had been warned of in Tlaxcala. Moreover, although the Spaniards had been given one turkey per person the first night, they were given very little to eat subsequently. The [Chololteca] captains came to see them on very few occasions, which heightened their suspicions. At that time, Moteuczoma's ambassadors spoke with Cortés I do not know how often in an attempt to prevent his journey to Mexico. Sometimes they asked him not to go there, since their great lord would die of fright when he saw them. On other occasions they said there was no road to Mexico that he could follow; still other times they asked him what he would do there since he did

not have any means of sustenance. When Cortés responded to all their objections with good reasons, they tricked the townspeople into telling him that where Moteuczoma lived there were many lizards, tigers, lions, and other **wild and** fierce animals **that would tear his men to pieces**, and that if their lord set them loose, they would tear apart and eat their small group of Spaniards. Since [Moteuczoma's ambassadors] realized that none of it had any effect on **Captain Cortés,** they plotted (f. 46v) **and schemed** with their captains and lords to murder the Christians, promising great favors from Moteuczoma if they did so. They also gave Captain General **Tequanhuehuetzin** a golden drum and offered to bring him the thirty thousand soldiers who had been stationed two leagues away.

The Chololteca promised to bring, tie up, and turn in **all** the Spaniards, but they refused to allow the Colhua soldiers into their town, fearing they would not be on their side during the attack. **The Chololteca already knew that [the Colhua] had betrayed them and could no longer be relied on, because they acted in** deceitful ways as was the habit of the Mexica. **[The Chololteca] also stated that, if they went along with this plan,** [the Mexica] would kill the Spaniards in their sleep, thus killing two birds with one stone and **becoming the lords of** [LdeG: taking] Cholola. **Moreover, [the Mexica] said that,** if they were not allowed to tie up [the Spaniards] in their city, [the Chololteca] should **at least** take them by another road **as indicated by [the Mexica],** not the main road to Mexico, but one on the left **that facilitated an ambush. Thus, the Spaniards would be led to a road no longer in use, straight into deep ravines, where they would be in great danger** of slipping on loose soil. There was also a gully so profound that its depth went beyond thirty estados, where they would be trapped, **dead or alive**, and taken bound to **the great lord** Moteuczoma **to be eaten in a feast, as was Mexica custom.** Once the plotting and scheming ended, the Chololteca began to pack their belongings, taking their wives and children **on foot from the city** to the mountains. Meanwhile, our people prepared to leave [Cholola], given the wretched treatment they received and the ill disposition that was shown them.

Against the natives' will, through His providence our mighty God allowed a scheme to be uncovered. It happened that the wife of a principal **and nobleman**, who out of piety or attachment for those men who wore beards **in the Spanish manner**, told **the interpreter Malintzin or** Marina of Huilotlan[167] to stay with her, for she loved her dearly. **Why should**

167. LdeG uses Vilutta and Uiluta, respectively, which are alternate spellings of Huilotlan (a form used by C. in f. 19v), a town located near the Río Coatzacoalcos. Gerhard, *Guide*, 140.

she leave to be killed with the Spaniards? She would be sorry to see [Malintzin] die at the side of her masters. Malintzin calmly took in what she heard, inquired about the plot and the men behind it, and then ran to seek Gerónimo de Aguilar. Together they went to inform **Captain** Cortés, **who was greatly frightened.** For this reason, he did not sleep or delay but immediately seized two of the town's **most** noble residents, **whom he interrogated.** They **eventually** confessed the truth about the plot and confirmed what the **principal** noblewoman had related. **Stalling for two more days so no one would realize what he had learned and in order to punish them for their treason, Cortés summoned** (f. 47) **the governors of the town, told them he was dissatisfied, and insisted that they not lie.**[168]

Cortés postponed his departure for two days to quiet things down. To frustrate their evil objectives and punish them, he called the governors and told them he was dissatisfied, insisting they not lie or deceive him, for he was more aggrieved by this than if they challenged him in battle, since it behooved good men to fight rather than to lie. They responded that they were and would always be his friends and servants, that they did not and would not lie to him, and that he should instead indicate when he wished to depart so they could serve and accompany him armed. He told them he would depart another day, that he wanted only a few slaves to carry his load, as his tamemes were tired and wanted something to eat. They smiled at these last words, whispering, "Why should these men want to eat, since they will soon be served up in chile sauce? We would have eaten them already had Moteuczoma not wanted them for his banquet."

Chapter 61. How Cortés Punished the Chololteca for Their Treason **of the Spaniards and Their Friends**

The following morning, gleefully believing that their **treacherous plan or** plot was all set, the Chololteca summoned many **slaves** to carry the Spaniards' belongings and others with hammocks to bear them as if on a litter, scheming to capture them inside [Cholola]. A great many armed, brave men arrived who would murder whoever rebelled. Then the priests of their temples sacrificed to the god Quetzalcoatl **(as they called him)** ten three-year-old children—five girls—**as was customary** at the start of war. Their captains positioned themselves **stealthily and** quietly with some armed men **(as if our men did not know their intentions)** by the

168. This sentence is paraphrased in the first half of the next sentence, suggesting that C. repeated it by mistake.

four entrances of the courtyard. **Our men also arranged themselves in good formation, and Cortés posted a Spanish captain and his men at the palace courtyard's four gates because they served as entrances.** Early that same morning, Cortés quietly verified that the **Spaniards**, Tlaxcalteca, **Cempoalteca** (f. 47v) and **other** friends had been alerted; he had some stand at the ready on horseback and told the rest of the Spaniards to spring into action if they heard an escopeta **and to kill the Chololans or Chololteca (as they were also called),** because their lives were at stake. When **Cortés** saw the townspeople arrive, he summoned the captains and lords to his chamber to bid them farewell. Most, **but not all,** came, but he let in only thirty, believing them to be the principales, from what he had observed earlier. He told them that he always told the truth, while they told him lies **and falsehoods**, despite his having implored and warned them **many times**. Because they begged him, albeit with **false and** wicked intentions, not to allow the Tlaxcalteca to enter their town, he willingly agreed and ordered his men not to harm them, preventing his army from taking even one hen, although they had not provided them with any food for whatever reason. Now, as payment for all his good deeds, they were plotting to kill him and all his men, and because they could not do so within the city gates, they would do so at dangerous places along the road where they wished to take him with the help of thirty thousand men from **King** Moteuczoma's garrisons, **who were ready and waiting to ambush him** two leagues from the city. **He said they would pay a dear price for their betrayal.** He stated, "For this wickedness, you will die, all of you, and the city will be razed as a sign of your treachery, leaving no memory of you **or evidence of what remains** of you." Since he knew of their plan, they could no longer deny the truth **or excuse themselves.**

The Chololteca were **speechless** with frightful wonder; humiliated, they looked at one another, **their faces flushed with shame,** [LdeG: saying], "This man is like our gods, who are omniscient, and there is no reason to lie any more. **We need to tell the truth,"** and therefore they all confessed the truth before the **Mexica** ambassadors, who were also present. And Cortés took aside four or five of the Chololteca so the Mexica could not hear, and they recounted **once again** from the beginning the story of their treachery. Then, Cortés told the ambassadors that even though they had compelled the Chololteca to murder him by order of **the great** Moteuczoma, he did not believe **the order**, as Moteuczoma was his friend and a great lord, and that great **and loyal** lords were not accustomed to lying [LdeG: and betraying]. Although he would punish those treacherous and perfidious scoundrels, the ambassadors need not fear, since they were inviolable as (f. 48) public officials and messengers of a lord who should be served rather than harmed and so good that he could not order

so infamous and evil a thing. He said all the above so as not to disagree **or sever his friendship with the lord** until he could meet him in Mexico.

Captain Cortés therefore ordered the killing of some of their principal captains **and principales** and had the rest bound and the escopeta fired as a signal. All the Spaniards and their friends attacked the townspeople with great force and violence, **laying waste to their enemies**, who were in dire straits. They killed **more than** six thousand people in two hours, **frightening the natives with their mercilessness**, so Cortés ordered them not to kill any women or children. His men fought for **a full** five hours; since the townspeople were well armed and their streets were barricaded, [the Spaniards] burned all the houses and towers where there were signs of resistance, forcing out all the residents. **Much blood was shed,** and they were drenched in it. They stepped on **nothing but** dead bodies, **and it was pitiful to see the slaughter done there, which terrified the natives.**

The Chololteca climbed their main tower, which has one hundred and twenty steps **to the temple's chapel.** Close to twenty noblemen and many priests from the same temple, armed with **bows,** arrows, **slingshots with rocks,** and pebbles **to defend it**, caused much damage **to our men.** Although their surrender was requested **three or four times,** they would not give themselves up. Our men set them on fire, and they burned, complaining to their gods **with great cries and moans** how terrible it was not to succor them **or defend** their city and sanctuary. The city sacked, our men took spoils of gold, silver, feather**work, and expensive, beautiful mantas.** The Indian friends seized **the opportunity and profited, taking besides** much cloth and salt, **which were most needed in their town, and** what they most desired, destroying as much as they could until Cortés ordered them **through a [town] crier** to desist. On seeing the destruction of their city and the killing of their kinsmen and households, the imprisoned captains tearfully begged Cortés to release some of them to find out what their gods had done with the commoners. They asked him to forgive all who remained alive so they could return to their homes, since they were less guilty of the damage than Moteuczoma, who had bribed them **with gifts he had** sent.

Cortés released two, and **at dawn** the next day the city was so full of people that it appeared as if, **despite the hour,** no man was missing. **It seemed that no one had perished because the entire realm had quieted down. The friends succeeded in having Captain** Cortés pardon them all, at the insistence of the Tlaxcalteca, whom [the Cholotecа] had asked to intercede on their behalf. He released the rest of the prisoners, telling **all of** them he would inflict similar punishment and injury whenever they lied or showed ill will to him, or plotted **schemes and** betrayals, which left them with no small fear **or trepidation.** In the end, Cortés reestablished

the friendship of the Chololteca (f. 48v) and the Tlaxcalteca, as it had been in the past, until Moteuczoma and before him, the other kings, **his ancestors,** made them enemies through words and gifts and intimidation, **which he inspired.** Since their captain had died, they appointed another **captain general** to govern them with Cortés's leave. **Captain Cortés then indicated a very good and humble man, who was much loved by him.**

Chapter 62. On the **Greatness of the City and** Sanctuary of Cholola, **and the Rites Practiced There**

Like Tlaxcala**, the city of** Cholola is a **great** republic with a captain general and governor chosen by everyone; **his name was Tequanhuehuetzin, the one Cortés chose was called don Tequanhuehuetzin.**[169] The city has **more than** twenty thousand houses within its walls and about the same number on the outskirts, and it is one of the most beautiful **and colorful** cities, **one of the better cities in New Spain.** It has many towers, since there are as many temples as the year has days and each temple has one or more towers, and thus they counted four hundred. **Its people**, both men and women, have a noble disposition, **good** demeanor, and are industrious. The women **are skilled at their labor, and thus** are accomplished silversmiths and artisans of the many crafts they practice. The men are outspoken and bellicose and good at whatever they do. They are better dressed than any we had seen **so far,** since they wear a kind of Moorish burnoose over their other clothes, **tying it on the left.** The extent of their land is **limited, but very** fertile, **fruitful, and sandy, and from it they harvest very great quantities of maize, legumes, and seeds for their sustenance, as well as flat and other smaller chiles, with which they supply other provinces.** Their lands are irrigated and easy to farm. However, there are so many people that not a single palmo **of land** remains vacant, and for this reason there are many poor people begging at doors, something never seen there before.

This is the most religious town of all the neighboring provinces. Cholola is a sanctuary for the Indians, to which they flock **as if** in pilgrimage to worship **and make their sacrifices,** and **therefore** they had many temples. Their main **temple** was **magnificent,** the largest and tallest in all New Spain, and in its chapel, atop one hundred and twenty steps **or stairs,** was worshipped the most important idol among their gods, **called** Quetzalcoatl,[170] **which is to say** "God of Wind," the city's founder. **In**

169. Conspicuously missing is a Spanish given name between "don" and "Tequanhuehuetzin."

170. [C: Queçalcouatl].

those days, the devil was worshipped and served in that famous temple, where he primarily revealed himself to them. Many poor foreigners beg for alms at the door, because of the great charity [the Chololteca] have (f. 49) **with their neighbors, and I was astonished to see such a thing, something I had never seen anywhere else before.**[171] **They regarded their god Quetzalcoatl as** a virgin, as they say in their manner of speaking, who did much penance, instituted a fast **they call *nezahualiztli*** and the drawing of blood from tongues and ears, and commanded them to sacrifice **nothing** but quails, doves, turtledoves, or other game. He wore only **fine** clothes, a long, white, tight cotton shirt, and over it a cloth studded with red crosses. **His wearing it was not without mystery, since our people heard that perhaps some time ago a saint had left these crosses to their ancestors, yet they had no knowledge of this.** They also had some green stones **that belonged to the god, which they greatly prized** as relics; one of them is **in the shape of** a female monkey's head, in a very natural style. This was discovered in the more than twenty days that our Spaniards were there **with Captain Cortés and his army.** At the time, it was a marvel to see so many **merchants** coming and going to transact, **buy, and barter,** and one of the things worth seeing at the markets was the variety and color of their earthenware.

[Chapter 63]. The Mountain Called Popocatepec[172]

About eight leagues from Cholola **on the road to Mexico** there is a mountain they call Popocatepec, which means "Mountain Range of Smoke,"[173] because it often gives forth smoke and fire. Cortés sent ten Spaniards there with many **natives and** locals to guide them and carry their food. The ascent was rough, uneven, and **very** cumbersome **because of the mountains, hills, and steep crags that surround it.** The Spaniards reached a site where much noise could be heard, but they did not dare climb any higher to investigate, because the earth was shaking **at the time**, and the **falling** ash impeded their progress, making them wish to turn back. However, two **Spaniards**, who must have been more determined or curi-

171. C. appears to have personally witnessed the charity of the Chololteca toward out-of-towners, and seems not to refer to precontact festivities at Cholula's famous temple. He, however, seems to echo in the first person a statement made in the previous paragraph by López de Gómara, "and for this reason there are many poor people begging at doors, something never seen there before."

172. Popocatepec ends with a locative here, rather than the customary absolutive ending, Popocatepetl. Thomas, *Conquest*, 230, states that the volcano is more than 18,000 feet in elevation.

173. The literal translation would be "On the Smoking Mountain."

ous, decided to discover the depth, **limit,** and mystery **of this monstrosity,** of so terrible and frightening a fire **constantly issuing forth.** They did it to bring news to Cortés, so they would not be considered despicable cowards. The rest wanted no part of it, even though their guides were afraid, saying that no human eye had ever seen nor any human foot ever stepped on it, **nor had any man in the time of their ancestors dared to ascend and inquire what that thing was, due to the abundant smoke and the insufferable stench that issued from it.** Nevertheless, the two Spaniards climbed through the ashes and arrived at the summit.

Under a thick cloud of smoke, they looked for a while and assumed that the great hollow—from which echoed the noise that shook the mountains—was about half a league wide and not very deep, and it was like a glass furnace burning at full force. The heat and smoke were so great that **these friends** turned back, following the same steps they had taken before so as not to lose their way and perish. They had barely walked a few steps when **many** ashes, fire, and embers gushed forth, followed by large burning stones, and they would have suffered death by fire had they not found shelter beneath a rock. Since they brought back (f. 49v) with them many signs **and news of what they had seen** and since they returned alive, **fit,** and healthy, many Indians came **forth** to kiss their garments, seeing them as **a thing of marvel**, a miracle, or as gods, and gave them many small gifts, as they were astonished by their exploit, **which they regarded as a wonder. Some people, or** these simple natives, believe it to be a mouth of Hell and that the tyrants or lords who **misrule their states and dominions** end there, going there after they die to pay for their sins. From there, they go to their rest **to another glory, for, although they did not know whether there was an afterworld, they believed in a place of rest.**

This mountain they called a volcano is similar to the one in Sicily; it is **very** high, has a round summit, and never lacks snow **on its northern face. Its southern side is covered with ashes, so it seems that the mountain's lower half has a warm climate. The upper half is exposed to the north wind, and in this part the air is frigid. The climate is cool from this region all the way to the northern reaches of Mexico [Tenochtitlan]. The mountain is surrounded by many springs that descend its sides to the most fertile valleys, where wheat is harvested on irrigated lands or land watered only by rain. This region is now known as the valley of Atrisco or Atlixco, Acapetlahuacan, and Villa de Carrión.**[174] The mountain's flames can be seen from afar at night when it flares up. There are many cities near it, Huexotzinco being the closest.

174. Gerhard, *Guide*, 55–57, locates Atlixco and Acapetlahuacan in today's "westernmost Puebla." We have yet to locate Villa de Carrión.

For ten or more years, it did not smoke, but in 1540 it flared up again, creating so much noise that it frightened all the inhabitants at a distance of four leagues, and even farther. The smoke it gave off was so thick that no one recalled seeing anything like it. The fire it expelled was so intense that the ashes reached Huexotzinco, Quetlaxcoapan,[175] Tepeyacac,[176] Quauhquechollan, Cholola, and Tlaxcala, more than ten leagues away. Some say the ashes extended for fifteen leagues, covering the fields and burning the crops and trees and even people's clothing.

[Chapter 64]. The Council Held by Moteuczoma Before Allowing Cortés to Go to Mexico

Cortés did not wish to quarrel **or argue** with **King** Moteuczoma before entering **his court in** Mexico, nor did he wish to hear the many words, excuses, and childish things they told him. **Thus,** Cortés complained forcefully to the ambassadors, **saying that he marveled at the fact** that such a great prince as **Lord** Moteuczoma, who so many great noblemen said was his friend, would seek a way to kill or injure through someone else and avoid being blamed [for it] if he did not **fully** succeed. Because Moteuczoma had not kept his word or been truthful **and now behaved as an enemy,** Cortés, who before wished to go as a friend and in peace, **now** decided to go as an enemy **in war,** no matter the outcome.

The ambassadors offered (f. 50) their apologies, **insistently** pleading with Cortés to put aside his anger and bitterness **toward them** and let one **of them** go to Mexico **and give notice of his approach, saying he would return** with a response **within six days** [LdeG: soon, for the road was not long]. **Captain Cortés lovingly told them he would allow one to go. The messenger returned in six days with a response** and a partner who had gone before, and they brought ten platters **or trays** of gold, one thousand and five hundred lengths of **richly** embroidered cotton cloth, many turkeys, some bread **or rolls they call tamales, many** cacao beans, and a type of wine they make out of cacao with **toasted maize and** centli, **ground and mixed as a drink, and other things of value.** They denied that **their king** had taken part in the Cholola plot or ordered it to happen. Rather,

175. Cuetlaxcoapan (Puebla de los Angeles). Gerhard, *Guide*, 220, notes that politically this area extended from the peak of Mt. Matlalcueyatl (Malinche) on the southern border of Tlaxcala to just beyond the Río Atoyac. There were three major autonomous polities in the region: Cholola, Quauhtinchan, and Totomihuacan, all subject to the Mexica. On the southeastern border, Hueyotlipan was also likely a part of this association.

176. Probably Tepeaca. Ibid., 278–79. It was a large, important polity located in today's central Puebla and maintained hostile relations with the Tlaxcalteca.

the troops garrisoned there were from Acazinco and Azazan,[177] two of their provinces that had alliances, contests, **and wars** with Cholola, for they were **neighboring** enemies who, induced by those scoundrels, would have planned such evil schemes. **(All of this so the Spaniards would not have knowledge of the land, as it had been foretold to them through an oracle revealing that their monarchy was coming to an end and that strangers would come from the direction where the sun rises to conquer them.) The ambassadors asked to be forgiven,** since from now on they would be **loyal, good** friends with Cortés, as would **their good lord** Moteuczoma, who had **always** been his friend, as he would soon see. He should go **in good stead, for he, his companions, and friends would be received in** Mexico, where Moteuczoma awaited, and these words pleased Cortés greatly. Moteuczoma was frightened when he learned about the killing and burning of Cholola. **They say that when Moteuczoma heard the ambassadors' account, he grieved for the great cruelty in the killing of the Chololteca and even more for the destruction and burning of their city.** He then told the ambassadors, **"My sons,** these are the people our god told me would arrive to rule **and subdue** this land." **And this is what the ambassadors said after being dispatched.**[178]

Moteuczoma then departed to visit his temples **and gods.** He cloistered himself in one **of them** for eight days to pray and fast and sacrificed many men to calm his gods as they revealed their anger **upon seeing the arrival of the strangers.** The devil spoke to him, encouraging him not to fear the Spaniards, as they were few, and saying that once they arrived he would do with them as he willed. He told him not to cease the sacrifices in order to ward off any disaster and to guard the favor and protection of **his gods** Huitzilopochtli and (f. 50v) Tezcatlipoca.[179] Quetzalcoatl, the god of Cholola, was **very indignant and** angry because the sacrifices of men were **few and** poorly done **and because they** had **not known how to defend themselves against the Spaniards.** For these reasons, Moteuczoma did not attack the Spaniards and **also** because Cortés had already sent word that he was going in war, not in peace, and because he had already granted Cortés permission to travel to Mexico to see **and await him there.**

Captain Cortés was already a great man **with a mighty army and fleet** when he arrived in Cholola. While there he gathered many more **men and arms,** and news of his fame spread throughout the **entire** land and that of the dominions of King Moteuczoma. From then on they **feared and**

177. Gerhard, *Guide*, 278, identifies Acatzinco as a subject polity of Tepeaca, which was located to the south and east of Puebla.

178. C.'s nonidiomatic Spanish leaves some ambiguity as to who is being dispatched by whom: *y asi dijeron estos que luego que le despacho.*

179. Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipoca (and hereinafter).

marveled at him. **His friends, well disposed on seeing [the Spaniards'] bravery, took heart in the fact that all the obstacles that their enemies warned them of did not materialize: The supposed difficult roads, famine, and illnesses; their being given to cruel butchers who ate human flesh; the strength of the city of Mexico, with its multitude of thousands and well-populated settlements; and, most of all, [Moteuczoma's] strength of will, feared and obeyed by all the lords of the land. The fierce Mexica put all this before the Spaniards so they would not continue. But such frightful admonitions were of no use because Almighty God inspired them with great hope.**

Therefore, Moteuczoma tried in many ways to win them over with gifts. The natives began to fear Cortés, and everywhere he went they opened their doors to him more from fear than love. At first, Moteuczoma did not want Cortés to go to Mexico and tried to frighten and discourage him, believing he would fear the dangers of the road, the strength of his city, the multitude of its men, and, most of all, Moteuczoma's strength of will, feared and obeyed by all the lords of that land. Seeing that his various dealings with Cortés were futile, he attempted to win him over with gifts, as [the Spaniards] demanded and seized **riches and** gold. Nevertheless, since **Captain** Cortés insisted on going to see him, **the ambassadors said** their king had asked the devil what he should do in this case. After seeking the advice of his captains and priests, it did not seem useful to wage war against the Spaniards because it would be a dishonor to quarrel with the few strangers claiming to be ambassadors. He also did not wish to incite his people **to fight** (f. 51) against him, as this would clearly result in the Otomi, Tlaxcalteca, and many others going against the Mexica to destroy them, **as actually happened.**[180] He therefore allowed Cortés to come **unimpeded** into Mexico, thinking he would be able to do as he willed with so small a number of Spaniards, **since the devil had told him he could eat them for breakfast if they provoked him. All these excuses were given by the ambassadors, whom the Mexica frequently sent to Cortés.**

[Chapter 65]. On What Occurred to Cortés Between Cholola and Mexico

Having received a positive response from the Mexica ambassadors, Cortés allowed the Indian friends to return to their homes if they so desired, and he left with some Chololteca who wished to accompany

180. In C.'s Nahuatl annals, it was not unusual for him to add *ynin huel*, "truly this happened," or *huel oniquittac*, "truly I saw it," to corroborate an event.

him. He refused to take the road shown him by Moteuczoma's men because it was bad and dangerous, according to the Spaniards who had taken it to **see** the volcano **some days earlier, as they might be ambushed along the road** and because they feared being attacked, according to the Chololteca. Instead, they took **a different** road, straighter and shorter. Admonished for the Mexica's advice to Cortés, they clarified that they would guide him along that road, although it was not a good one and should not be taken.[181] **Huexotzinco is at the foot of the said Mount Vulcan, now called "Of the Ranchos," or Xalltzintli, meaning "Under the Sand."**[182]

There he was well received and attended and was even given some slaves, clothing, and gold, although these poor people had few things, as they had been besieged by **the Mexica on** Moteuczoma**'s orders and were despised** because they were allies with Tlaxcala. The next day, before eating, he climbed two leagues to a pass located between two snow-capped mountain ranges **where he stopped with his companions.** If the thirty thousand soldiers [LdeG: from Cholola] **I mentioned earlier** had been waiting there for the Spaniards **in ambush** and had they gone when it was snowing, they would doubtless have perished because it was so cold, **unless God, who accompanied them, intervened on their behalf.**

From the pass can be seen the land of Mexico and the lake with all the **cities and** towns **settled around it**, and this is the most wonderful sight in the world.[183] **Captain** Cortés rejoiced at the view and the allies who were with him even more so. Nevertheless, some were frightened, and there were **many** diverse opinions among them as to whether they should go there. Some showed **signs** of wanting to mutiny, but Cortés, using his great prudence, **good advice,** and discretion, overcame the dissent **with the energy and bravery which he inspired in them. They were assuaged by the favorable prospects he showed them, calming them and capturing their hearts with his sweet words.** ~~**The falling snow made it so cold at the pass that the arms of both Spaniards and natives were covered with snow as soon as they extended them. The natives wore no clothing or garments, but went about naked in their fashion.**~~[184] (f. 51v) **Captain Cortés's** efforts, hopes, and good words **gladdened many of them, and**

181. [LdeG: Because the road went through the enemy lands of Huexotzinco, he advanced but four leagues on that day, in order to sleep in some hamlets belonging to Huexotzinco.]

182. Surely Mt. Volcán, and Nahuatl: Xalltzinco. We have yet to locate this site. It might possibly be Xallatzinco.

183. This locale is known in Mexico today as Paso de Cortés.

184. It is not known whether it was Chimalpahin or the copyist who crossed out this passage.

almost all lost the fear and fantasies they so often showed, seeing that he was the first to take on any task or danger, and they were much less afraid of what they had fantasized.

After descending to the plain on the other side [of the pass], he found a country house[185] that was so large and good that it easily accommodated all the Spaniards and even six thousand Indians they had brought from Cempoala, Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, and Cholola. Moteuczoma's people put up straw huts for the tamemes, which **King Moteuczoma ordered to be built in every town they visited. These huts were lean-tos, straw houses built near the messenger stations. The house was built in the style of a grand palace; indeed, it was one because in ancient times the Mexica lords had such lodgings in case they needed to wage war against their enemies. Captain Cortés was lodged and entertained in one of these palaces.** There, they had a good dinner with great **festive** bonfires **to keep people warm.** Moteuczoma's servants attended them generously, even giving them women **as servants.**

Many leading Mexica lords, among them a relative of Moteuczoma, came to speak with him, **welcoming him to their lands and** giving him **a gift of golden jewels worth at least** 3,000 pesos. They beseeched Cortés to turn back **and not go to Mexico** because of the **bad roads,** poverty, and hunger he would find **in this land. Not only would his companions die from hunger since there was nothing to eat, but** there was danger of drowning since travel is by small boat. The Mexica would give him much more and all the tribute he wished for the emperor who had sent him, payable on an annual basis across the sea or wherever he desired. Cortés received them properly, giving them a few small items from Spain, and particularly to that great lord's relative, saying he would happily and willingly serve such a powerful prince if he could do so without angering his king. His going there would bring nothing if not great well-being and honor to Moteuczoma since he would only speak with him and turn back. Their provisions would be sufficient. All that water was nothing compared to the two thousand leagues of sea he had crossed solely to see him and communicate some matters of great importance.

If they caught him off guard in the course of the conversation, they would have attacked him, since, as some say, many had come for that purpose. But he informed the captains and ambassadors how the Spaniards did not sleep at night or remove their arms and clothing and would immediately kill anyone who approached them. Cortés did not oppose this, **as it was customary in war.** [The ambassadors] should thus give

185. This is a literal translation by LdeG. The structure itself was mostly like a Nahua palace, or *tecpan*.

their men warning **not to come before them or walk among them but to take care not to die at the Spaniards' hands,** as it would pain him **infinitely** if any were to die. (f. 52) He spent the night there, and at **God's** dawn the next day he departed **with his army,** and they traveled two leagues to Amaquemecan.[186]

This town is located in the foothills of the volcano mountain [Popocatepetl] in the province of Chalco, a place with hamlets **that are subject to the *cabecera***, "head town," **which is Amecameca**[187] **and at the time was subject to the kingdom of Mexico. It had seven cities** with **more than twenty-five** [LdeG: twenty] thousand residents,[188] **and Cortés admired the many people he found in this new world.** The lord of this town, **called Cacamatzin Teohuateuctli,** gave him forty female slaves, 3,000 pesos' worth of expensive jewelry, and abundant food for all of Cortés's people for two days. Secretly, Cacamatzin complained of Moteuczoma's tyranny **over his parents, who had been lords. Cortés then placed a cross on the summit of Amaqueme.**[189] From Amecameca, he descended four **or five** leagues to a small place, one half of which was settled on the lake and the other half on land at the foot of a rough and rocky mountain, **which is now called Ayotzinco.**[190] He was followed **there** by a great many **Mexica** who provided for his needs. These men, together with some of the townspeople, wanted to fight the Spaniards, so they sent some spies to observe their nightly activities. But Cortés's men killed up to twenty of them, and that was the end of it, and the pacts against the Spaniards' lives ceased. It is laughable that at every step they wished and attempted to kill the Spaniards, but could not do so.

On another day, twelve lords, **among the most powerful in Mexico,** arrived late in the morning just as the army was about to depart. Foremost **among them** was Cacamatzin, nephew of **the great** Moteuczoma,

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186. Today, Amecameca (and hereinafter). It was a major altepetl in the Chalco confederation, comprised of five altepetl, each with its own *tlatoani*, "ruler," and constituent *tlaxilacalli*, "districts." This is C.'s home territory, and he almost always includes some new information about Amecameca in his annals and chronicle. For information about the sociopolitical organization of Amecameca and greater Chalco, see Susan Schroeder, *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco* (Tucson, 1991).

187. Always prideful of Amecameca, note later (Chapter 130; f. 102v) where C. describes Tlalmanalco as the cabecera of Chalco, which was indeed the case by 1520.

188. LdeG uses *vecinos*, which may mean "heads of household," "inhabitants," or possibly "households." Yet see Schroeder, *Chimalpahin*, 34, citing C.'s Nahuatl annals where he describes the population total as sixteen thousand.

189. Amaqueme was a good-sized hill in the center of the altepetl and is known today as Sacromonte.

190. Gerhard, *Guide*, 102, describes Ayotzinco as being northwest of Amecameca and close to Lake Chalco. It is not clear if it was affiliated with the Chalco confederation or with the city of Xochimilco.

king and ruler of Tetzcoc,[191] a **well-built** young man twenty-five years of age, whom everyone obeyed **with great reverence.** He was carried on a litter on the shoulders **of the Mexica lords,** and when he was lowered they cleaned the streets before him, removing the stones and straw from the ground he walked on **wherever he went.** These lords came **only** to accompany **Captain** Cortés, and they made excuses for Moteuczoma, **so Cortés would forgive him,** saying that because their lord was ill, he had not come in person to receive the lord Cortés. The Mexica still insisted that the Spaniards turn back and not continue on to Mexico, implying that they would act against them **if they went there,** blocking their passage and entry. **It is admirable, for if the Mexica had greater understanding, they could well have destroyed the Spaniards with many ruses by which they would all perish.** They could easily have done so, **but for the divine will of God's Providence, because they were unable to apprise their situation or destroy the causeways with many bridges that the Spaniards crossed or the numerous springs located along the road to Mexico.**[192] **Captain** Cortés spoke to them **very courteously and** deferentially, **as if to a king,** and gave them **much rich clothing from Castile** [LdeG: barter goods]. Then Cortés departed with a large company of notable **and very honorable** persons, followed by an infinite number of Indians spilling over the **causeways and** roads.

Many of those Mexica also came to see such new and famous men. (f. 52v) **Astonished,** they marveled at their beards, clothing, weapons, horses, and artillery, stating, "These are gods." Cortés always warned them not to go among the Spaniards or their horses unless they wished to be killed. The **captain** said this, both so they would not be emboldened to fight and to keep the road open **and vacant,** since they surrounded the Spaniards. **The Mexica stopped to observe their dress and the appearance of their faces, noting their beards and long hair, which at that time the men of the Spanish nation wore in long, wavy locks to their shoulders. They were even more frightened to see people on horseback in full armor, and, fearing their artillery, said, "These are gods." Others**

191. [C.: **Tezcuco**]. The polity is more accurately spelled Tetzcoco (and hereinafter), after Lake Texcoco, which has become the common spelling of this place name. Ibid., 311–12, notes that it was a large territory extending from the eastern shores of Lake Texcoco to the north and east. It was the jurisdiction of the Acolhuaque and was part of the Triple Alliance, which included the Mexica and the Tlacopaneca. It was comprised of at least seven autonomous altepetl, each with a tlatoani and many subject towns beyond its immediate jurisdiction. It was celebrated for its great Kings Nezahualcoyotl (r. 1431–1471) and Nezahualpilli (r. 1471–1515), whose sons and grandsons provided a formidable challenge to Cortés. Once conquered, Tetzcoco served as the site from which the Spaniards launched their final attack against Mexico Tenochtitlan.

192. [LdeG: However, the Mexica were blind or did not dare to destroy the causeway.]

said they were sons of the sun, believing them immortal and other things which they could not comprehend.

Cortés marched more than half a league along a well-made causeway, more than twenty feet wide, reaching a settlement surrounded by water with two thousand hearths, very good houses, and many towers. The lord **or governor** of the town **was a relative of the king of Mexico, called Atlpopocatzin, who** received them well on that day, **hosting and** providing for them honorably **and feeding them splendidly**. He **even** invited them to spend the night, secretly complaining to Cortés about Moteuczoma's many affronts and unjustifiable tribute requirements. He confirmed to Cortés that there existed a good road all the way to Mexico, not unlike the causeway he had just crossed. On hearing this, Cortés was relieved, as he had decided to stop there to build boats or canoes. However, still afraid that [the Mexica] would destroy the causeways, he stayed on high alert. Cacama and the other lords pestered him not to remain there, saying he should go on two leagues to Iztacpalapan,[193] a town belonging to another nephew of the great lord.[194]

He did what the lords implored, since there were only two leagues from there to Mexico, and he could enter it the next day with plenty of time and at his leisure. Thus, he went to sleep at Iztacpalapan, and on the way, in addition to several messengers who came every two hours from Moteuczoma, there came to greet him at some distance from the town Cuitlahuac**tzin**, lord of Iztacpalapan, and his relative, the lord of Colhuacan, **who was called Tezozomoctzin.**[195] They presented him with female slaves, clothing, feathers, and up to 4,000 pesos in gold. Cuitlahua**tzin** hosted all the Spaniards in his house **or** in several large palaces, superbly built of hewn stone **and well-worked wood**, with courtyards and upper and lower chambers. **They had vast numbers of servants as if they were dukes or counts, owing to their greatness, for indeed they were lords of a realm, but all obeyed that of Mexico.** The **walls of their salons and** chambers were covered with fine **mats of green gentian and** tapestries **of richly dyed** cotton cloth, fashioned in their own style. Moreover, there

193. Istapalapa in Gerhard, *Guide*, 178–79. LdeG used the same spelling for this polity more than fifteen times, and it seems that C. did not correct it. The common spelling today is Iztapalapa. Thomas, *Conquest*, 275, places the town's population between 12,000 and 15,000 and states that it was the location of the mountain where the Mexica carried out their fire ceremony every fifty-two years. The huge dike for flood control built by King Nezahualcoyotl could be seen from this vantage, too.

194. The relative's name was Cuitlahuatzin (and hereinafter). In his Nahuatl annals, C. maintains that Cuitlahuatzin was a brother, not a nephew, of Moteuczoma Xocoyotl. See Chapter 66 at note 204 (f. 53v) where C. corrects LdeG.

195. Tezozomoctzin. CC, 2:93, states that he was the second son of Tlatolcaltzin, the ruler of Colhuacan.

were **very beautiful** gardens with fragrant flowers and trees (f. 53) with [LdeG: many pathways of cane lined with] roses **of different colors, all fenced by wooden lattices and nets along which climbed flowering vines.** These gardens had **some springs for irrigation,** a fine orchard of fruit-bearing trees, and a vegetable garden with a large square pond of stone masonry measuring four hundred pasos on each side, with steps leading down to the water and even to the bottom, containing all sorts of fish. It attracts many cranes, wild ducks, [and] gulls, and **an infinity of** birds covered its waters. **The natives said it was all for the recreation of the great king of Mexico, who came by boat to enjoy himself with his queens and concubines.** As for its population, Iztacpalapan had up to ten thousand households, **and today are found fewer than two thousand.** [LdeG: This settlement is in the saltwater lake, half on land, half over water.]

Chapter 66. On the **Admirable** Reception Given Cortés by **King** Moteuczoma

From Itztapalapan to Mexico there is a very broad causeway of more than two leagues distance that easily accommodates **more than** eight horses side by side. It is as flat as a level, and anyone with good eyesight can see straight to the city gates. There **are many towns and cities on both sides; on the left on the mainland** is **the town of** Mecaltzinco[196] with **more than** four thousand households [LdeG: and it is surrounded by water]; **a half league toward the south is another town, called Colhuacan, with more than six thousand households; another called** Huitzilopochtli,[197] which **together with Pochtlan** has five thousand; and **a league to the west is** Coyoacan, with **more than** six thousand. These cities have **or had** many temples with numerous towers that grace them. They benefited greatly from their trade in salt, **extracting and** selling it to all towns far and near at fairs **and tiangues,**[198] **which is how they were called. They take water from the salt lake** [LdeG: by small ditches into holes on the ground], **for there are two lakes. The freshwater lake is eight leagues long from its origin in the provinces of Chalco, Ayotzinco, and Quetlahuac.**[199] **In**

196. Mexicalcingo in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 138 (Mexicaltzinco hereinafter). Gerhard, *Guide*, 178, reports that it was an isthmus located between Lakes Texcoco and Xochimilco. It was one of four autonomous polities—Colhuacan, Huitzilopochco, Itztapalapan, and Mexicaltzinco—and was located due south of Mexico Tenochtitlan with close genealogical and political ties to the Mexica.

197. Surely today's Huitzilopochco.

198. Nahuatl: *tianquiztli.*

199. Today, Cuitlahuac (and hereinafter); not to be confused with the name of the ruler

Xochimilco,[200] **another good province, all the springs converge north of the town of Mexicaltzinco. From there this mighty river flows eastward toward the great city of Mexico Tenochtitlan into the main saltwater lake with no outlet. Fed by many rivers from the north and east, it measures twelve leagues in length toward the north and seven leagues in width. The natives extract salt and crusts from the salt water. The fishing is plentiful; there are small white fish that the Spaniards call kingfish and other diverse species: a flavorful whitefish, one-third or one-fourth of a *vara* in length, which they call *amillote*,**[201] **and others called *xouille*,**[202] **whose flesh is dark but very tasty; frogs; small shrimp; and clams larger than sea oysters. These fish are available throughout the year.**

The city supplies the many surrounding towns with fish all year but mainly (f. 53v) **with salt, which as I said before, hardens in holes they make through which the water is filtered out.** [LdeG: The salt crystallizes in them. The salt is formed into cakes and balls, and also baked, which is better.] These laborious tasks bring much income to **the king** [LdeG: Moteuczoma].

There are drawbridges at certain points along the causeway that go over [LdeG: openings, which are] the places where the waters from the two lakes merge and flow into the main lake. From this causeway **Captain** Cortés walked together with his people **until he arrived near the city where the causeway joined another connecting the many lands from the south.** He brought with him four hundred Spaniards, who were followed by **porters** and their friends. There were up to six thousand men, **Tlaxcalteca, Cempoalteca, Chololteca, and other peoples,** barely making their way among the throngs who came from all parts to see the Spaniards. Cortés arrived at a nearby bulwark, very strong and two estados high, with two towers flanking a parapet with battlements and two well-fortified gates. **The captain told his artillery men to position six pieces of artillery in their carts at the front and other pieces at the rear to provide cover for the Spanish army. And so they arrived at the city's entrance.**

Cortés was received by three thousand noblemen, courtiers, and residents who gathered there, all similarly dressed in fine garments

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of Itztapalapan and the man installed as ruler of Mexico Tenochtitlan after the death of Moteuczoma Xocoyotl.

200. Xochimilco was located on the western edge of Lake Xochimilco and at one time encompassed a vast territory, although it was considerably diminished by 1520. It was known for its aquatic gardens and bustling trade on the lake. After the conquest, it was one of only four altepetl designated as a *ciudad*, "city." See Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule* (Stanford, 1964), 32.

201. Molina, 5, identifies *amilotl* as a whitefish, like an *albar.*

202. Ibid., 161v, describes *xouilin* as a fish that is one palmo long and looks like a trout.

according to their custom. Each nobleman bent to touch the ground with his right hand, kissed the earth, and moved on. The reception lasted one hour, and it was marvelous **to see the good order they maintained.**

A main street leads from the bulwark **or stone wall to the royal palace** with a drawbridge of large, thick timber, **more than twelve** [LdeG: ten] pasos wide, under which flows a current of water **from a crag outside the city at the western part called Chapoltepec,**[203] **which is a nearby garden and recreational area of the great lord.**

Captain Cortés stopped at the bridge with his people and from behind the crowd came King Moteuczoma to welcome Captain Cortés, under a green feathered canopy **decorated** with **fine** gold **leaves** and much silver work, borne by four of his **most august** lords, **all richly dressed. Their lord walked at the center,** supported by the arms by his two nephews, Cacama**tzin, king of Tetzcoco,** and Cuitlahua**tzin,**[204] **lord of Iztacpalapan (although the author Francisco Rodríguez** [*sic*] **de Gómara takes Cuitlahuatzin to be a nephew of the great lord, he was not his nephew but a blood brother by his father or mother. I say this, don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Quauhtlehuantzin). Moteuczoma was followed by powerful princes and lords of great estates, such as Tetlepanqueçatl,**[205] **king of Tlacopan,**[206] **Yzquauhtzin Tlacochcalcatl, lord or lieutenant of Tlatelolco and son of King Tlacateotl from the said town or city of Tlatelolco,**[207] **treasurer of King Moteuczoma; Atlixcatzin Tlacatecatl, captain general and son of King Ahuitzotl of Mexico; Tlepehuatzi Tlacochcalcatl,** (f. 54) **son of King Tizociçi**[208] **of Mexico; Totomotzin, said to be**

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203. Chapoltepec is a good-sized hill located west of the central square in Mexico Tenochtitlan.

204. *CC,* 1:55, 57, states that Cuitlahuatzin succeeded his brother Moteuczoma Xocoyotl to the office to tlatoani of Mexico Tenochtitlan, and that both were sons of Axayacatzin. He was first tlatoani of Itztapalapan before assuming the throne in Mexico Tenochtitlan.

205. Tetlepanquetzatl (and hereinafter).

206. Tlacopan is west of Mexico Tenochtitlan and is known today as Tacuba. Gerhard, *Guide*, 297, notes that it was once part of a vast, well-defended territory ruled by the Tepaneca. Its capital was Azcapotzalco. The Tepaneca were conquered by the Mexica and Acolhuaque in the 1430s and were incorporated as the third arm of the Triple Alliance, and Tlacopan subsequently became the principal altepetl in the region. The Tlacopaneca fought alongside the Mexica until the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan.

207. Tlatelolco was once a co-altepetl of the Mexica on the northern section of the island. It had a long tradition of intermarriage between the offspring of rulers, which afforded strong political ties. In the 1470s, the ruler of Mexico Tlatelolco declared war against the Mexica Tenochca, but was soundly defeated. Tlatelolco never again enjoyed preeminence, and there is evidence of ongoing hostility between the two polities. After the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan, the Tlatelolca blamed the Tenochca for the defeat. See Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 12: *The Conquest of Mexico.*

208. Tizoctzin.

the son of the great captain general who was president of the supreme judicial council, or Chief Judge Tlacaelel Cihuacoatl, founder of the Mexica empire; and Queçalaztatzin, Ticocyahuacatl, Ecatenpatiltzin, and Quahu[a]piatzin.

The king and his nephews were similarly richly attired, except that the lord wore **with great presence and as king** a pair of gold shoes with jewels **encrusted with many precious pearls.** The soles were attached with straps as depicted in ancient times **and resembled sandals.** He brought **hunchbacks and dwarves for his honor,** [LdeG: servants in groups of two] carrying in their hands some cloths **painted in various colors** to place before the lord as he passed by. **Wherever he walked,** he was followed by two hundred lords in procession, all barefoot (f. 54v) and dressed in livery finer than that of the first three thousand. They walked **in an orderly fashion,** close to the wall with their eyes downcast, **very humbly,** not daring to look him in the face, so as not to be disrespectful. **When they stopped, Captain** Cortés **came to them,** dismounted from his horse, and went to embrace Moteuczoma as was our custom. Those who brought Moteuczoma by the arms stopped Cortés from reaching him, for it was sinful to touch him. However, they saluted each other **through the interpreters, Malintzin and Aguilar, who were at the captain's side.** Cortés then placed a necklace of pearls, diamonds, and other precious stones around his neck. **After Cortés bowed to him, King** Moteuczoma walked ahead with his nephew **Cacamatzin,** ordering the other to go to **Captain** Cortés and take him by the hand **as a sign of honor.** They proceeded to the middle of the street **with great majesty, Moteuczoma wearing on his head a gold diadem or royal crown high in the front like a bishop's mitre, all inset with pearls and fastened at the back, and with two lords fanning him with tall fans.**[209] Very pleased with the pearl necklace the **captain** put on him, the king [LdeG: as a great prince who would not take a gift without reciprocating with a greater one, had someone bring out] **in turn put on the captain** two chains of red shrimp, thick **like snail shells,** held in great esteem **by the natives.** From each chain hung eight gold shrimp of perfect manufacture, each one *xeme*[210] in length. **Captain Cortés** [LdeG:

209. [LdeG: As soon as Cortés arrived, the two hundred men in livery came one by one to speak with him and bid him welcome, touching the ground with their hands and then moving on. All the hours in the day would not have been enough to accommodate all those from the city who wished to greet him. However, as Moteuczoma passed by, they turned their faces toward the wall and dared not approach Cortés.]

210. According to Covarrubias, 680, a xeme, or *jeme*, is a unit of measure determined by the distance between the tips of the thumb and index finger, or two palmos; approximately six inches.

Moteuczoma] placed the chains around his neck with his own hands, which they marveled at and appreciated greatly.[211]

They came to the end of the street, **which was some distance from** [LdeG: of one-third of a league to] the royal houses. It was straight, broad, and very beautiful, lined on each side with houses whose doors, windows, and roofs held so many people looking at the Spaniards that I do not know who marveled more, our people at the great city's throng of men and women, or theirs at the artillery, horses, beards, and men's outfits that they had never seen before.[212]

They then arrived at a great courtyard, which, **according to the Mexica,** was a chamber of idols that used to be the houses of Axayacatzin, **the former king. King** Moteuczoma came to the door **of the entryway,** took **Captain** Cortés by the hand [LdeG: into a very large hall], and made him sit on a platform, **handsomely adorned with sumptuous tapestries. Among them there were many round feather shields of many colors and designs boldly displayed. Each shield or buckler had long green plumes more than a vara in length that they call *quetzalli* and so beautiful and green that they could be seen from a distance.**[213] **Moreover, there were many bracelets, feather ornaments, and other insignia in orderly exhibit. The floor was covered with beautiful mats made from reeds they call *tolli*, which are plentiful in the lakes. After seating him,** Moteuczoma addressed **Captain** Cortés, "You are in your home; eat, rest, and enjoy yourself, and I shall return later." Just as you have heard **and as it has been said,** this was the reception given Hernando Cortés by **the great King** Moteuczoma, the mighty ruler, in this his great city of Mexico on the eighth day of the month of November, **day of the Four Crowned Saints**[214] in the year of Christ **our Lord's** birth, one thousand five hundred and nineteen.

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211. Note that, according to C., it is Cortés himself who places the necklaces around his neck, and not Moteuczoma, as LdeG stated.

212. C. loses his place and begins to transcribe once again a section that he had already worked on a few lines above. This time, however, he copies this section word for word, without introducing any additions. The section he copies verbatim goes from the end of folio 54 to 54v.

213. Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, 11:19, identifies the bird as a *quetzaltototl*, "resplendent trogon," and describes the feathers that grow on the tail as "green, herb-green, very green, fresh green, turquoise-colored. They are like wide reeds: the ones which glisten, which bend."

214. The four saints are Severo, Severiano, Carpóforo, and Victoriano. See Antonio Sicard, ed., "Santoral de noviembre," in *Misal cotidiano* (México, 1923), xxii.

(f. 55) **Chapter 67.** How **King** Moteuczoma Spoke to the Spaniards, **Welcoming Them**

The house lodging the Spaniards was very large and beautiful, with long halls and many chambers amply suited for **all** the Spaniards and almost all the Indian friends **of Cortés** who followed **along the roads,** serving and accompanying them armed. They were all positioned **at their appointed places with their valiant Spaniards and captains.** The entire house was clean and beautiful, carpeted and upholstered with coverings of cotton and **naturally** multicolored feathers, **marvelously crafted with many round feather shields and long plumes in green and other colors,** and there was much to see everywhere. When **King** Moteuczoma departed, Cortés assigned the Spaniards their place with the artillery facing the door and then ate a good meal from **the magnanimous hands of** a great king for a great captain**, as were King Moteuczoma and Captain Cortés.** Moteuczoma also ate, and once he learned the Spaniards had eaten, he met again with **the captain** [LdeG: Cortés], greeting and sitting near him on a platform placed there for him. He then gifted him with many diverse jewels of gold, silver, and feathers, plus six thousand cotton garments in marvelous colors, splendidly crafted and woven. This demonstrated his greatness and confirmed what the people, both past and present, had imagined.

He did all of this with much gravity **and greatness** and told **the interpreters** Marina and Aguilar to translate his speech **for the Spaniards**, saying, **according to their translation:**

My Lords and Noblemen,

I am very pleased to have men such as you in my house and kingdom so that I may treat you well and with favor, according to your merit and my station. If until now I begged you not to enter **my kingdoms,** it was because my people were frightened at the sight of you, because you scared them with your fierce beasts and because you brought man-eating animals. And also because you came, **as it was said**, from the sky, bringing down rays, lightning, and thunder with which you made the ground tremble and wounding whoever angered you or whomever you wished. However, I now know that you are mortals, of good will, **and good people**, who harm no one. I have seen the horses, that are like deer, and the artillery pieces, that resemble blowguns, and thus I take what I was told as deceitful and a lie. I **also** regard you as relatives, for as my father told me, who heard it from his father **and from the other ancient lords,** that our ancestors, kings from whom I descend, were not natives of this land but newcomers **and**

foreigners.[215] They came with a great **powerful** lord who, after a short while, returned to his native land. Many years later he came back for them; however, they did not wish to leave because they had already settled here with their women and children and held much power **and authority** over the land. He departed angrily, (f. 55v) telling them he would send his sons to govern and keep them in peace, **calm, with reason** and justice, under the ancient laws and religion of their fathers. Because of this, we have always **waited and** hoped, believing that these people from those parts would some day come to dominate and rule us. I therefore believe you are these people, given from where you come and the news you bear from the great king and emperor who sends you, for he may have heard of us. Thus, Lord Captain, be assured that we will **be your friends and** obey you, if you do not plan to deceive or trick us. We will share with you **and your friends** all we possess. I say this not only because of your virtue, **good** fame, and exploits as **brave and** valiant knights. I do this of my own accord, for I know well what you did in Tabasco, Teoacatzinco, Cholola, and in other places, where so few defeated so many. If you believe that I am a god, and the walls and roofs of my houses and all their furnishings made of fine gold, as I know you have been told by **our enemies from** Cempoala, Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, and by others **I will not mention,** let me disabuse you of this, although I regard you as **good** people who are not so deceived. You know **and have learned** that, on your arrival, many **of my lords** rebelled, turning from vassals into mortal enemies, but I will clip their **newly acquired** wings and **put down their fearsome haughtiness.** Come here, touch my body made of flesh and bones, for I am a man like any other and mortal **like everyone else on earth.** I am not a god, no! **It is true** I am king and remain king because of my dignity and eminence. You see that all these houses are made of wattle and daub, and at most of hewn stone, and that those **with whom you spoke,** lied. As for the rest, it is true that I possess silver, gold, featherwork, weapons, and other jewels and riches as the treasure of my fathers and grandfathers, guarded from ancient times as it is the custom of **great** kings. All this, **Captain**, you and your companions will have **and enjoy** whenever you wish, **as I have seen and noticed that we all desire with great greed since even the enemies who come in your company are covetous, for they have robbed and killed.** Meanwhile, **rest and** enjoy youselves, for you must be tired.

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215. LdeG states that Moteuczoma's father was told by his grandfather about the foreign origins of their ancestors; C. changes the sense of the sentence so the ancestors, too, make that declaration to Moteuczoma's father.

Captain Cortés **bowed and** knelt; with a cheerful countenance and visage **(**because the king shed tears, **and it seemed that all those princes anticipated the difficulties ahead),** he responded that he had insisted on coming to speak with [Moteuczoma], trusting his clemency and goodness because he knew that all he had been told about him by those who did not wish [Moteuczoma] well was **false,** a lie and an evil thing. Cortés added that Moteuczoma had seen (f. 56) with his own eyes the deceit and rumors told about the Spaniards. He should believe as true that the emperor and king of Spain was his natural lord, whom he awaited as head of the world and legitimate lord of the lineage of his ancestors; as for the treasure, he regarded all that as a great favor from Moteuczoma. **King** Moteuczoma then asked **Captain** Cortés if the bearded men were all vassals or slaves so that he could treat each one as deserved. [Cortés] responded that all were his brothers, friends, and companions, save some, who were **his** servants. With this, Moteuczoma returned to his tecpan, which is a palace. There he learned from the interpreters who was a nobleman and who was not, and he sent them presents accordingly. The hidalgo and good soldier received them from a steward, but the sailor received them from a lackey, and so on, **and thus he knew what each deserved.**

[Chapter 68]. On the Cleanliness and Majesty of **King** Moteuczoma's **Physical Appearance**

Moteuczoma was a man of medium height, **not very tall,** and of slight build. He was **dark skinned** with a very dark-brown complexion, which is common to all the Indians. He wore his hair long **down to his shoulders, very black,** and had a thin beard with **long** [LdeG: up to six] hairs measuring one jeme. **He had large eyes, arched eyebrows, a wide brow, and a commanding presence.** He seemed good tempered **and calm,** although strict; he was **affable,** soft-spoken, gracious, but **very** fair-minded, **and he had the gravity expected of** a great lord who makes himself feared and obeyed**.** Moteuczoma means "A Frowning, Grave Man"[216]; these proper names are given **by vassals** to kings, lords, and **persons of high rank, who enjoyed this status, and were given not only to men but** women **also.** The syllable *-tzin* is added [to the end of proper names] as a sign of courtesy and dignity, like our own "don," the "sultan" of the Turks, and the "mullah"[217] of the Moors, [LdeG: and thus

216. See Chapter 93 (f. 74), where LdeG states that Moteuczoma's name means "Angered by His Misfortune."

217. In the manuscript *-tzin* is often rendered as *-cin* and *mullah* as *mulei.*

they say "Moteuczomatzin"]. His subjects held him in majesty, as he did not allow them to take a seat before him, wear shoes, or look him in the face, except for a handful of great lords, **who were his close relatives.** He was very fond of the Spaniards, and as he regarded them highly and enjoyed their conversation, he did not make them stand in his presence. **When he saw them wearing fine clothes,** he exchanged his for theirs, if he liked the clothes from Spain. He changed his clothes **three or** four times a day, **wearing another fine set,** and never wore the same clothes twice. His clothes were saved to give away as rewards, as presents, and as gifts to servants, messengers, and soldiers who fought and **through their exploits** captured the enemy. This was a great gift and privilege of sorts. They were the same as the many beautiful mantas he would often send to Cortés **with his ambassadors**.

Moteuczoma kept himself extremely clean and neat, for he took a bath twice a day, very seldom leaving his chambers, and then only to dine. He ate by himself with great solemnity and abundance. His table was a pillow (f. 56v) or a pair of **dyed** hides **finished like suede**. His seat was carved in the shape of a bench in one piece **with small feather cushions;** this bench was concave, its seat dyed and superbly decorated, and the tablecloths, place mats, **napkins**, and towels were made of cotton, very white, new and spotless, as they were used only once. Four hundred royal pages, the sons of lords, brought the food, placing it all in the hall, and Moteuczoma then came to look at the dishes, selecting which pleased him the most. Braziers were placed beneath to warm them and retain their flavor, and he would rarely have others, save for a good stew praised by the servants. Up to twenty of his most beautiful women, or his favorites, or his weekly attendants, would come and meekly serve him from the dishes. He would then sit down, and the chief waiter placed a wooden screen around the table so the people in the hall could not come near, and he alone served and took away the dishes, for while the lord dined the pages could not approach the table or say a single word, nor could any man unless he was a jester or someone with a question. All served him barefoot.

The drinking was accompanied by less pomp and ceremony. On one side of the king, although at a certain distance, were six old men, **and they were like *oidores***, "judges of the Real Audiencia [high court]," to whom he gave some plates with the dishes he liked. They accepted and ate them with great reverence and respect, without looking at his face, which was the ultimate humility they could manifest. While dining, he was entertained by music played on panpipes, flutes, seashells, bone instruments, drums, and other instruments, as they had no better. I will not speak of their voices, as they are not good, and they did not know

how to sing. At mealtime, there were always dwarves, hunchbacks, cripples, and other such people, all to give honor or cause laughter, who were fed with the jesters and entertainers at the end of the hall along with the relief guard.

The leftovers were given to three thousand men of the regular guard, who always stayed in the courtyard and main square. For this reason, it is said that [the servants] always bring out three thousand dishes and three thousand jars of **cacao** drink, which is their wine, and that the cellar and pantry are never closed, and their contents were a marvel to see. They never stopped cooking nor stocking daily all that was in the main square—an infinite number **of goods,** as we shall see below—and what was brought by hunters, renters, and tribute payers. The plates, saucers, cups, pots, **jars,** and the rest of the dishware were made of very good clay pottery, **plain and glazed,** like that found in Spain, and was used only once to serve the king. He also had a large table service made of gold and silver, but it was seldom used because to use it twice seemed base. **The natives said that it was kept in storage and brought out only for certain major festivities.** They also say they cooked children, and that Moteuczoma ate them. **This is false, for** he only ate men who had been sacrificed. **He ate their feet and heels, as** (f. 57) **he regarded them the most flavorful flesh, but this he did only a few times. The former kings were very cruel and the eating of human flesh did not disgust them,** but **Moteuczoma, as they say,** did not do so routinely. Once the table was cleared, the women, who remained standing with the men, came in to wash the king's hands as humbly as before. They then retired to their chambers to eat with the rest of his women, as did the others. **The six lords conversed with the king while the women ate,** save for the noblemen and pages, who stood watch. **They were present there day and night, since they always served their lord as sentries and guards in any circumstance.**

[Chapter 69]. On the Foot Jugglers

After the table was cleared and the people had gone **to their chambers,** Moteuczoma remained seated, **resting** while the merchants entered barefoot, for everyone removed their shoes before coming into the palace, **and like secretaries and functionaries were known to do.** Only the great lords kept their shoes on, such as King **Cacamatzin** of Tetzcoco,[218] **who was one of the greatest and was Moteuczoma's nephew, and** Tlacopan's, another

218. *CC*, 1:157–59, states that King Cacamatzin was one of three rulers who went with Moteuczoma to meet Cortés in 1-Reed, 1519. He was a son of King Nezahualpilli of Tetzcoco and had been ruling for four years.

king and lord, and a few others, such as his **close** relatives and **foreign** friends, **and only titled lords, for others could not enter. Many poor people came in,**[219] **and he heard them all and imparted the justice they asked for, and so they departed content, and in the end** everyone came in, whether lords, rich men, **or poor**, and if it was cold, they would wear old, ordinary, or tattered robes over their fine new ones. Everyone bowed three or four times before him; they would not look directly at his face but spoke with humility, and exited walking backward. He responded with few words in a low, measured voice. At times, he remained silent, letting his secretaries and advisers respond, for they were there for that purpose. They would leave without turning their backs to the king. Afterward, he entertained himself with music, singing, or jesters, which pleased him very much. He also enjoyed watching some jugglers they have there who use their feet as ours use hands. With their feet, they hold an **andiron** or club made from a log, rounded, smooth, and even, which they toss in the air and catch, making it twirl two thousand times in the air so well and fast that it can hardly be seen. They also perform other games, feats, and tricks with great coordination and skill, drawing admiration, and some **of these Indians** came to Spain when **Captain** Cortés came **to present his report, and then he brought many *voladores*,**[220] **foot jugglers, and players of other games that today the natives still perform** [LdeG: and many saw them at court]. There were also mattachines and another dance routine in which a man with strong shoulders supports another standing up, and that one a third one, **and in this fashion he dances among others to the beat of drums, and this was also seen by the king many times.**

Another game that Moteuczoma watched is called *patoliztli*. It is similar to a board game **or chess** (f. 57v) and played with **black, white, or red** beans, **about the size of our fava beans. They are marked with a white dot in their dimple, like the dice or *arenillas*[221] we use here, shaken in the hand and tossed. When they stop spinning, if they do not show the dot, one loses, and if they show one, two, or three [dots], one wins and takes the board.** It is similar to a board game **or chess,**[222] and played

219. Here, C. seems to turn the sense of the original sentence, *venian pobremente vestidos*, "they came poorly dressed," into a reference to poor people who came to the palace seeking justice. LdeG, however, states only that the noblemen who visited Moteuczoma wore tattered robes over their regular dress as a sign of humility.

220. Voladores, or "fliers," is the Spanish term for native dancers who climbed up a tall post and then descended from it by circling around the pole with their feet attached by ropes to the top of the pole. This ritual continued to be practiced in the colonial era; indeed, there was a site designated for the voladores in colonial Mexico City's plaza.

221. A type of dice that had markings on only one of its sides. *DA*, 1:384.

222. C. seems to lose his place once again and transcribes the preceding paragraph a second time.

with striped fava beans or beans, like dice or arenillas, which they call *patolli*. They shake the beans with both hands, toss them on a mat or the floor where there are lines drawn like in checkers, and mark with pebbles where they land, putting or taking away the markers. They bet all they own on this game, and gamblers and lower-class men even wager their bodies as slaves.

[Chapter 70]. On the Ball Game

At other times, **King** Moteuczoma would go to **see** the **Mexica play the ball game they call** *tlachtli*,[223] which is a ball court. The ball is called *ollamaliztli*, which is made with the rubbery sap of the *olli*,[224] a tree that grows in the humid lowlands. When pierced, it bleeds thick, white drops that, mixed and stirred, harden and turn blacker than pitch but without blackening one's hands. The mixture is rolled into round balls **about the size of our bowling balls.** Although heavy and hard to carry, they bounce and jump much better than our inflated balls. They do not stop the ball but play continuously to win as in the games called *balón* or *chueca*,[225] where the ball is directed against the opponents' wall or passed over their heads. They hit the ball with any part of the body that best suits them, although certain plays are not allowed. It is most admirable to hit the ball with one's hips or buttocks, and thus they wear a leather piece over the latter. They can hit it as long as it is on the rebound, which happens often. They play one game after another, one team against another, keeping score. Depending on the players, they **sometimes** bet one load of mantas, gold, and feather items, or even themselves, as is allowed in patolli. The tlachtli or *tlaxco* is a low, narrow, sunken court designed for their game with high walls, wider at the top than at the bottom and higher on the sides than each end. It is always whitewashed and smooth, with stones on the side walls like mill stones **the size of a round shield** and a hole **the size of an orange** through the center, where (f. 58) the ball rarely enters. Whoever puts the ball through, a miraculous event since this is difficult even when hands are used, wins the game.

According to ancient custom and law among the players, the capes of the spectators **watching the game** on the side of the wall are won by whomever puts the ball through the stone, and other times it is the capes

223. Tlachtli means ball court rather than ball game; Molina, 117v.

224. *Olli* in Molina, 76, and described as the sap from a medicinal tree that is also used as a ball in a game.

225. These are references to Spanish games in which the ball is in continuous play.

of all those present. However, sacrifices must be made to the idol of the ball court and the stone through which hole the ball passed. The onlookers demanded that the sacrifice be a thief, an adulterer, or someone near death. Thus, each ball court served as a temple because two images of the god of the ball game were placed on the two lowest walls at midnight on a propitious day, amid ceremonies and acts of sorcery. They performed other ceremonies in the center of the ball court, singing ballads and songs for this purpose. Then a priest from the Templo Mayor came with the other priests to give their blessing; by saying certain words and tossing the ball four times across the ball court, he consecrated it, and it could now be used for the games, but not before. They are so superstitious that even the ball court owner, who was always a lord, could not play ball without first engaging in who knows what ceremonies and offerings to the idol. **King** Moteuczoma took the Spaniards to the game and was no less pleased to see it played than to see those **we usually play** of cards, dice, **and other games.**

[Chapter 71]. The Dances of Mexico

King Moteuczoma celebrated other enjoyable, lengthy public diversions that delighted the palace and even the entire city and were **held at the palace,** to which the townspeople came. And thus during the meal **or banquet,** there began a **collective** dance called *netoteliztli*,[226] a dance of rejoicing and pleasure. Long before it began, they extended a very large mat on the palace courtyard where they placed two drums. One, called *teponaztli*, is small, **one vara in length, round and thick,** made out of a single hollow piece of wood carved on the outside. It has no hide or parchment but is played with **two** sticks similar to ours **called *olmaitl*, attached to each other by rubber cords, with which they play the teponaztli**. The other **drum, called *huehuetl***, is very large, **barrel shaped, round** and thick, **one and a quarter varas in height,** and similar to ours here. It is hollow, carved on the outside and painted. They cover, **or its mouth is covered,** with a **clean,** taut piece of parchment of tanned deer hide, and its tone increases if taut and decreases if loose. It is played with the **two palms of a man's** hands without sticks and has a bass tone**.** Both drums are **played at the same time,** accompanied by voices resounding pleasantly **throughout the city,** although they have no good voices there. They sing happy songs, full of joy and charm, or ballads honoring their (f. 58v) ancestral kings, which recount wars, victories, exploits,

226. Nahuatl: *netotiliztli*; Molina, 71.

and other deeds in rhymed verse, well sounding and pleasant. When it is time to begin, eight or ten men first whistle loudly, then they play the **said** drums very softly. Soon the dancers appeared dressed in fine garments—white, red, green, and yellow—done in many different colors, **beautifully woven with flowers or various hunting scenes.** In their hands they hold bouquets of roses **and flowers of many sorts,** as well as fans of rich featherwork, **which, like their very long green headdresses, are made from local peacocks called quetzalli,** superbly set in gold**.** Many come with similar garlands of **a thousand kinds of** wonderfully fragrant roses; many wear feather half-masks, **or full masks,** in the shape of heads of eagles, tigers, **lions**, caymans, and **other** wild animals, **and they also drape their backs with human figures.**

On many occasions **over** a thousand dancers join the dance, **and more than two thousand surround the square in a circle**, with no less than four hundred **Indians,** all principales, noblemen, and even lords, and the higher their station, the closer they are to the drums. They dance holding hands **in groups of three** concentric circles. They are **first** led by two limber and skilled dancers, and all follow them: when they sing, the entire chorus answers with many words or few whenever needed, depending on the ballad or song, as is done here [in Spain]. Everyone follows the rhythm set by these two, who dance one movement while those in the last circles do two, because there are many of them and they are farther back, requiring more effort. However, the dancers all raise or lower their arms or their heads simultaneously, with no lack of grace and with such synchrony and feeling that all dance in step, and the men go into a trance. They begin slowly with ballads, playing, singing, and dancing softly, seemingly serious. However, as the momentum increases they sing carols and joyful songs, and as the dance becomes animated, they move faster and faster. Since this lasts for a long time, they often drink **their own wine, or ground cacao mixed in naturally painted gilded goblets. Each dancer drinks from a goblet and then dances,** as many servers offer cups with drink **for anyone who wishes.**

Sometimes jesters show off by lampooning the costumes and language of other nations, or imitate drunks, madmen, or old women, and this makes the people laugh and rejoice. All who have seen the dance say it is **grand and** worth seeing, better than the zambra of the Moors, which is the best dance we know in these parts. Women perform it much better than men; **it is performed by foreign and Tlaxcalteca women,** since in Mexico **the Mexica** women do not do this dance in public, **something never seen.**

(f. 59) [Chapter 72]. The [LdeG: Many] Women that **King** Moteuczoma Had in the Palace

Moteuczoma had many **important** houses, some within **his palaces,** some outside Mexico, for recreation or as showplaces, and also as residences. We will not mention them all, for it would take a long time to recount where he lived and dwelled. The main house, called tecpan, which is to say a palace, had twenty doors leading to the square and public streets. It had three very large courtyards, one with a beautiful fountain, many halls with one hundred rooms twenty-five or thirty feet in length and width and one hundred baths. Although built without nails, the edifice was very sturdy **because** the walls were made of **very good** quarry stone, marble, jasper, porphyry, which is black stone with ruby-red streaks, white, and other translucent ones. **The great lord's chambers were different, for they were of limestone, and all these blocks were inset with mirror-like pieces of shiny stones and pearls.** The roofs were made of the superbly carved wood of cedar, **beech,** palm, cypress, pine, and other trees. The chambers were painted **in a thousand ways,** carpeted with **beautifully colored, fitted** mats, and their walls hung with rich cotton tapestries, **marvelously fashioned from colorful bird feathers** and rabbit fur, **which they had.** Because they were made of mantas over bare mats [LdeG: or over straw, or simply bare mats], the beds were poor and bad. Although few men slept in these houses, there were a thousand women, and some say three thousand, including ladies, their servants and slaves, and many daughters of lords. Moteuczoma took for himself those he liked, giving the rest as wives to his servants and other nobles and lords. They say that sometimes he had one hundred and fifty women pregnant all at once who aborted by taking potions, either persuaded by the devil or perhaps because their offspring would not inherit. Many old women guarded these women and did not let any man cast even a glance at them, **or they would pay with their lives.** [These women's] **virtue was so great that, despite their idolatry, they obeyed their laws,** for kings desired chastity in the palace.

An eagle attacking a **fierce** tiger with legs and claws at the ready was the coat of arms at the entrance of their superb gates and palaces and on the banners of King Moteuczoma and his ancestors. Some say it is a griffin rather than an eagle, asserting that there are griffins in the mountain ranges of Teouacan.[227] They say the towns in the Valley

227. Tehuacan in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 149. According to Gerhard, *Guide*, 260, it was, at least initially, called Teohuacan and located on the far southeastern edge of modern Puebla.

of Ahuacatlan were depopulated because [the griffins] ate the townspeople, and thus they argue that those ranges are called Cuitlachtepec, from *cuitlachtli*,[228] which is a griffin similar to a lion. I believe that **in our times there are none, because the natives say they have all disappeared or gone far inland. They also say that this bird or animal has fine hair rather than feathers and is called *quetzalcuitlachtli*.** (f. 59v) **It was an animal resembling a lion, with strong teeth that crushed bones and caught men and deer with its claws. Today** there are none because the Spaniards have not seen them. The Indians depict these griffins, called quetzalcuitlachtli, according to their ancient paintings, with fine hair rather than feathers; they said that they crushed the bones of men and deer with their claws and teeth; they resemble lions and eagles, because they are depicted with four legs, teeth, and hair more like wool than **fine hair or** feathers, with a beak, **teeth**, claws, and wings for flight. In all this, their paintings correspond to our writings and paintings **or brushes**; therefore, it is neither bird nor beast. Pliny holds that this matter of griffins is **false and** a lie, although there are many tales about them. There are many lords **in this land's nations** who have a griffin on their coat of arms, in flight with a deer in its claws, **or grasping a deer and other animals they eat. Even in Spain they are depicted on some coats of arms, and therefore the natives say they once existed, but they disappeared or were eaten when the new peoples populated their habitat.**

[Chapter 73]. The House of Birds Kept for Their Feathers

King Moteuczoma has another house with many good chambers and handsome galleries supported by jasper pillars made from a single piece that lead to a very large orchard with ten or more ponds, some with salt water for sea birds, others with fresh water for river and lake birds. **The ponds hold a large number of small fish that feed birds of prey and other sorts.** They often need to drain and refill them **with clean water** in order to keep the bird feathers clean. People are astonished by the thousands of birds of so many colors and shapes that gather there, **overflowing the area,** that the Spaniards marveled at them, for they had not known or seen most until now. Each species was fed the same kind of food eaten in the wild; if plants, they were given plants; if grain, they were given **maize**, centli, beans, or fava beans, and other seeds. If they ate fish, fishes, **and other lake birds were given fish and other food from the**

228. Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, 11:5, describes *cuitlachtli* as "of wooly, tangled, snarled fur, of dark, bushy tail. . . . It stalks one; preys, hisses at one." *Cuetlahctli*, "wolf," in Molina, 26.

water, and for which ten arrobas of fish were ordinarily caught every single day in the lakes of Mexico. They were even given flies and insects as sustenance. Three hundred people maintained **and took care of** the birds; some cleaned the ponds, others caught fish, others fed the birds, some deloused them, others guarded the eggs, others removed the brooding hens, others treated them when ill, and yet others plucked them, which was the most important task, because from these feathers (f. 60) are made rich cloths, tapestries, shields, featherwork, fans, and many other items with gold and silver, all exquisite works.

[Chapter 74]. The House of Birds for the Hunt

[Moteuczoma] has **or had** another house with ample rooms and chambers, called a house of birds not because it contains more birds than the other but because its birds are larger, **such as brown and white geese not as large as those in Spain, many brown herons, larger geese called *huehuei atotolin*,**[229] **a multitude of cranes and crows, many parrots and macaws, and a different sort of large bird they say are wild pheasants.**[230] The birds of prey that they kept are considered the best and most noble. **The Spaniards were truly astounded to see so many different birds and the great size of the many wooden cages in which a thousand kinds of fierce animals were kept by order of the great lord, and all because he knew his ancestors had done so.**

In the upper chambers of the houses also lived men, women, and children born with white skin and hair; as they are a rarity, they are considered a miracle. There were many dwarves, hunchbacks, cripples, and men with other deformities that **the great lord** kept as entertainment **and even to serve him in his chamber.** They say that as children, these people were crippled and caged for the greatness of the king, and each creature had his own room and chamber. In the lower chambers there were many cages with strong bars; some held lions, others large tigers, lynx, and wolves, and in sum there was no four-legged beast or animal not found there, **and all this to honor the greatness of King Moteuczoma's royal ancestors.** Since he had ordered this, although they were very ferocious, they were fed their rations, such as hens, turkeys, deer, dogs, and game. **Not only were they so fed, but many times when the kings meted out justice to a traitor or an adulterer, they gave him to these animals to be**

229. Ibid, 11:27, 29, translates atotolin as American White Pelican.

230. Contrary to LdeG's assumption, not all were birds for the hunt, judging by C.'s addition.

torn apart alive. This was certainly great cruelty and inhumanity, but in the end the law of idolaters.

In other rooms in large pots, jugs, and similar receptacles holding water or soil were kept snakes as thick as one's thigh, serpents, crocodiles they call caymans, water lizards, other types of lizards large and small, other (f. 60v) such vermin, and water or ground snakes so fierce and poisonous that they frighten on sight. There was also another room in **a different part of** the courtyard with cages with round branches and perches and all sorts and manner of birds of prey: lanners, sparrow hawks, kites, vultures, goshawks, nine or ten kinds of falcons, and many assorted eagles, among which there were fifty larger than our own Golden Eagles,[231] and for its meal one of them eats an entire **native** turkey, which is larger than our peacocks. There were many of each kind, kept in their own sections and fed five hundred turkeys daily with three hundred men as their caretakers, not counting an infinite number of hunters.

He also had many other **kinds of** birds there, with which the Spaniards were unfamiliar, but they were told they were very good for hunting, and this could be seen by their appearance, size, claws, and strength. To the snakes and their mates they gave **for their sustenance** the blood of sacrificed people to suck and lick, and some even say they also tossed them the flesh, which was avidly eaten by the lizards. The Spaniards did not see this but saw the ground covered with clotted blood, as in a slaughterhouse; it stank horribly and trembled when prodded with a stick.

It was worth seeing the comings and goings of the men who cared for the birds, animals, and serpents in this house. Our Spaniards were pleased to see the diversity of the birds, the fury of the savage beasts, and the viciousness of the **serpents and** poisonous snakes. However, they could not stand to hear the snakes' frightening whistle, the lions' horrifying roar, the wolves' sad howl, the lynx and tiger's fierce growl, and the other animals' cries when they were hungry or when they remembered that they were caged and not free to give rein to their ferocity. At night the place truly became a replica of hell and the house of the devil, and so it was. In the hall, one hundred and fifty feet long and fifty feet wide, was a chapel of sorts gilded with thick gold and silver panels, **decorated and studded** with many pearls, agates, carnelians, emeralds, rubies, topazes, and other precious stones. There, King Moteuczoma went to pray **and carry out his rituals for the devil. He did this always** at night, when the devil came to speak to him; he appeared and counseled him on the petitions and pleas he heard.

231. LdeG refers here to a type of Spanish eagle called *águilas caudales*, which probably refers to the golden eagle *(Aquila chrysaetos)*.

Moteuczoma also had a building like a granary that served only to store grain and another to store the rich featherwork and mantas received from rents and tributes **that came from all the provinces subject to his royal** (f. 61) **crown. It was truly a wonder to see the king's many riches in houses that served as treasuries,** with a rabbit [calendrical day sign] for his coat of arms[232] and insignia over the door; here dwelt all the functionaries, treasurers, accountants, collectors, and all those who had official **royal** posts and charges in the king's treasury. None of these royal houses was without a chapel or oratory for the devil, where he was worshipped because of what they contained. These large houses **were guarded by ferocious animals and** accommodated many people.

[Chapter 75]. The Armories

King Moteuczoma had other houses as armories **with all manner of weapons and shields,** and over each portal a **stone** heraldry of a bow and two quivers **with their arrows.** As they used all sorts of weapons, there was an infinity: bows; arrows **of medium size and of one *braza*[233] and one half in length with flint or sharp stone tips;** smaller spears; darts **made from strong reeds that grow in the mountains, with hooked tips and made from oak cured hard as steel and from cherrywood, which is even better; stacks of** clubs **of the same wood, not like ours but one vara in length and three or four fingers wide;** slingshots **that were their most dangerous weapon and best defense;** spears; bludgeons; swords; shields and round shields more decorative than useful; helmets; shin guards; and, in lesser numbers, bracelets made of gilded wood covered in leather. The wood used for these weapons is very strong; they scorch and tip it with pieces of flint or bone of the skate or ray, which is very fierce, or another bone that remains in the wound, infecting and impeding its healing. The swords are made of wood with sharp flint shards inserted and glued. The glue is from a root they call *zacotl*[234] and from *teuxalli*,[235] a coarse sand like that found in a diamond vein, which they mix and knead with the blood of bats and who knows what other birds. It binds, holds, and lasts so well that it does not break even after sharp blows. From it they make an awl-like instrument that penetrates any

232. This is a reference to Moteuczoma's year of accession, 10-Rabbit (1502 in the Julian calendar), on the day count 9-Deer, 14 April; *CC*, 1:157.

233. A linear unit of measure, commonly two varas; approximately 66 inches.

234. This is probably Nahuatl *çacatl*, which Molina, 13v, translates as *paja*, "hay." However, çacatl is a grass, not a root.

235. Nahuatl: possibly, *texalli*, "sandstone, used to sharpen tools"; Molina, 112.

kind of wood or stone, even a diamond. Although it seems impossible, their swords cut through spears, slice off a horse's head, and even pierce and destroy iron. In the city no one bears arms; they are used only in battle, for hunting, or during the watch.

[Chapter 76]. Moteuczoma's Gardens

In addition to the above, Moteuczoma had many (f. 61v) country houses with fine gardens in which there were medicinal and scented plants with flowers, roses, and **grand** trees **with a variety and number of fragrances**. The Creator should be praised for such diversity, such freshness and fragrances, the artistry and delicacy of the thousand types of leaves and flowers. Moteuczoma did not allow any vegetables or fruit grown in these bowers, stating it was not proper for kings to profit or gain from palaces of pleasure; that orchards were for slaves and merchants. However, he had orchards with fruit trees, but far away, that he seldom visited. Outside Mexico, he had houses in vast forests surrounded by water, within which were springs, rivers, fish ponds, rabbit warrens, hatcheries, and crags and boulders for deer, roebucks, hares, foxes, wolves, and other game, which were frequently hunted by the Mexica lords. Such were the houses of Moteuczomatzin and so plentiful that few kings could rival him.

[Chapter 77]. Moteuzcoma's Court and Guard

Every day six hundred lords and noblemen kept guard over Moteuczoma, each with three or four armed servants, according to their station and wealth; some even had twenty. There were three thousand men, and some say that those who guarded the king inside the palace were many more. They all were fed the leftovers from the main meal, as I said before; the servants did not go upstairs but left before nightfall after having eaten. The guards were so many that they filled even the largest courtyards, squares, and streets. It is possible that, to impress the Spaniards, they enhanced the guard in appearance and majesty, as the regular one would have been smaller. However, it is certainly true that all the lords subject to the Mexica empire, who were said to number thirty with one hundred thousand vassals each, as well as three thousand lords, each with his own dominion, who had many vassals, resided part of the year in Mexico at the great lord Moteuczomatzin's court out of respect and obligation. When they returned to their lands and domains it was with the license of the king, who required that they leave a son or a brother as

insurance so they would not take up arms. For this reason, Moteuczoma had houses for all of them in the city of Mexico Tenochtitlan. So great was his house and stature and his court so grand, generous, and noble.

[Chapter 78]. Everyone Pays Tribute to King **Moteuczoma**

There is no one in all of Moteuczoma's kingdoms and dominions who does not pay some sort of tribute to the lord of Mexico. The lords and nobility pay a personal tribute, the commoners, called *macehualtin*, pay with labor and goods, in two forms whether they inherit or rent the land. Those who have their own inheritance pay one-third of their production each year. It can be dogs, hens, birds with good feathers, rabbits, gold, silver, **precious** stones, salt, wax, honey, mantas, **rich** featherwork **from vassals in foreign lands to the south, many** loads of cotton, cacao, **ears of the best maize or** centli, chili peppers, sweet potatoes, fava beans, **tomatoes**, beans, and all sorts of fruit, vegetables, and seeds, which (f. 62) are their main forms of **sustenance and** livelihood. The renters pay their assigned tribute by the month or year, and since this is a great amount they call them slaves, since they considered even an egg to be a sign of the king's largesse. I heard that they rationed what [the renters] ate and took everything else. Thus, they dressed poorly, and they had only a pot to cook what they gathered, a stone to grind their maize, and a mat to sleep on. Not only did renters and landowners pay this tribute, they also served with their labor whenever the great lord wished, which only occurred in times of hunting and war, **when they were forced to heed the call of their captains.**

The kings of Mexico held such power over them that they remained silent even when their sons or daughters were taken for whatever purpose. This is why some say that, for every three sons born to a commoner or noncommoner, one was sacrificed. This is false, since if true no one would be left in the land, nor would it be so well populated. Besides, the lords ate only the sacrificed, who were seldom free men but were slaves and war captives. The kings were cruel butchers, killing many men, women, and some children every year, but not as many as was said, and below we will count by the day and head those killed. All these rents were brought to **the royal court in** Mexico on someone's back, and those who could not [carry them] used boats **and canoes,** at least for the tribute needed **most urgently** for the upkeep of Moteuczoma's house **and palace**. The rest was spent on the soldiers or exchanged for gold, silver, precious stones, jewelry, **mantas,** and other fine goods the kings kept in their chambers or stored in their treasuries. They had many granaries and

silos in Mexico, and, as I said, buildings where they stored their bread with one main official and other minor ones who received, counted, and distributed it according to painted books.

Each town had its tribute collector, similar to the alguacil who carried a staff and fan in his hands **as a sign of his office.** They came to give account to **the Mexica** of the tribute payments and census, according to the tax rolls they kept for each place and province in their district. If [the people] were mistaken or attempted to deceive [the tax collectors], they were put to death and even their descendants were punished as relatives of a traitor to the king. In the end, if they would not comply and pay at given periods or installments, they could be taken either as slaves and sold to pay their debt and tribute or they could be sacrificed. **When** the **commoners were in poor health, they** were allowed to get well; if lazy, they were detained immediately. They also had many provinces that paid some tribute and acknowledged [Moteuczoma] with some of their most valuable products, but this was to honor him more than for his gain.

Therefore, in this way Moteuczoma had more than necessary to sustain his house and soldiers and maintain his wealth, possessions, and the court and its service. It took little tribute to build as many houses as he wished. For many years the neighboring towns that did not pay or contribute were commissioned to build his houses, repairing and readying them at their own cost. Their officials paid for the labor they supplied, and they dragged or carried on their backs quarry stones, (f. 62v) lime, wood, water, **cut stones**, and other materials needed for construction. They also supplied in great quantity all the firewood burned in the numerous kitchens, chambers, and braziers. They needed about five hundred loads carried by tamemes, which is one thousand arrobas, and many more on winter days, even when mild. For the king's braziers and hearths, they brought the bark **of some local trees they call firs, as well as** the bark of oaks and many other trees, **which are plentiful in the mountains.** Since [the bark] burns well **and smells good,** they **therefore** use [these trees] **for the lords,** because these natives are great flatterers.[236] They use other trees because they give a better fire or brighter light, **or they were given these tasks** so they would work even harder.

King Moteuczoma had one hundred large cities and **heavily populated** provinces, from which he collected the rents, tributes, payments, and vassalage I mentioned above, and where there are armies, garrisons, and treasurers to receive the service and tribute owed him. His dominion and rule extended from the north to the South Sea and two hundred leagues inland. **In the east, the northern part of the kingdom**

236. C. seems to have lost his place and copied the previous three sentences once again.

of Tetzcoco extended more than two hundred leagues all the way to the [Río] Pánuco. It is true that within Moteuczoma's kingdoms there were some provinces and great towns, such as Tlaxcala, **which was free,** and **the kingdom of** Michhuacan,[237] **also free, and located toward the south on the road to Guatimalla.**[238] **These kingdoms were mortal enemies of the Mexica,** as were the peoples of Pánuco and Tehuantepec. They did not pay him **tribute,** taxes, or service **for they were absolute monarchs,** although he profited from their trade and barter whenever he wanted. There were many other lords and kings, such as the lord of Tetzcoco, **whose rule lasted a long time,** and the **powerful** lord of Tlacopan. **These two lords were never the subjects of Mexico** and owed nothing, save for the obedience and homage **they paid each other,** because they belonged to the same lineage **of their kings. They were always fast friends, marrying their sons to one another's daughters,** and the kings of Mexico gave their daughters in marriage to them as well.

[Chapter 79]. On Mexico Tenochtitlan

When Cortés arrived, Mexico was a city of sixty thousand houses. Those of the king and the lords of the courts were large and good; those of the rest were small and miserable, without doors or windows. Although small, they have two, three, and **even** ten inhabitants; thus, there is an infinite number of people **in the city.** It is built in the midst of water, similar to Venice, **with wide main canals that cut through the city,** whose entire mass is surrounded by water. It has three types of **causeways or** thoroughfares, very broad and straight. Some are of water alone with many bridges, others of earth alone, and others of water and earth; on the latter, men walk on foot on the part made of earth and travel in boats on the part made of water. The waterways are naturally clean, and the solid earthen roads are swept often. Almost all the (f. 63) houses have two doors; one opens onto the causeway, the other to the water, where the boats dock. Although built on water, the city does not drink it but brings potable water from a spring in Chapoltepec, a hill one league distant, where, at the foot carved in rock, there are two statues said to be of Moteuczoma and his father Axayacatl, with their shields and lances. The water is brought through two pipes, each as wide as an ox; when one is dirty, the flow of water changes to the other. This spring supplies

237. Today, Michoacan (and hereinafter). This was a large territory south and west of central Mexico that was inhabited largely by Tarascan speakers who were able to resist subjugation to the Triple Alliance.
238. Today, Guatemala.

the city, its ponds, and the houses' fountains, and the water is also sold from canoes after a tax is paid.

The city is divided into two districts; one is called Tlatelolco, meaning "Small Island"; the other, where Moteuczoma resides, is Mexico, or "Where the Water Flows." It is the main district because it is larger and the kings dwell there. The city retains this name, although its ancient proper name is Tenochtitlan, meaning "Stone Fruit," which is the combination of *tetl*, "stone," with *nochtli*, the prickly pear fruit called *tuna* in Cuba and Haiti. The tree, or, better put, the thistle that produces the nochtli fruit is called *nopal*[239] by the Colhua Mexica Indians and has somewhat round leaves one palm wide, one foot long, and one to two fingers thick. Depending on the locale, they have many harmful prickly thorns; the leaves are green, its thorns dark brown; when planted, it grows leaf by leaf so thick at its base that it resembles a tree, and its leaves grow not only on the top but on the sides, and since they grow **in Spain**, no more need be said.

In certain parts, such as that of the Teochichimeca,[240] where the land is poor and they suffer drought, the juice of the nopal leaves is drunk. The nochtli fruit resembles an **early or** mature fig, for it has the same small seeds and thick skin, but they are longer and have a crown, just like the fruit of the medlar. They come in many colors: green on the outside and red inside, and taste good; yellow; white; and mottled because of the mixture of its colors. The mottled nochtli tastes good, the yellow is better, but the white, which abounds in its season, is the most flavorful and perfect. They last a long time; some taste like pears and others like grapes. They are very refreshing and thus are eaten during the summer on the natives' journeys and whenever it is warm. Spaniards are fonder of them than the Indians. This fruit is better when cultivated, and only the very poor eat those grown in the wild that they call *montesinas* or *magrillas*, "small ones." There is also a red nochtli, which although flavorful is not highly valued. Some eat them only because they appear early, and the first fruits are discarded not for being bad or plain, but for the reason that they stain fingers, lips, and clothing, and it is very difficult to clean the stain. The fruit reddens the urine, making it seem like pure blood, and **thus** many recently arrived Spaniards have fainted after eating these red figs, thinking they would lose all their blood when they urinated, making their companions laugh. (f. 63v) Many physicians

239. Nahuatl: *nopalli*.

240. An ill-defined territory and people well north of Mexico Tenochtitlan. In C.'s Nahuatl annals, he often used Teochichimeca to refer to migrating peoples as they carried their deity. Once an altepetl was established, however; that is, once the group was settled, the *teo-* was dropped from the description of the founding fathers.

newly arrived from Spain have been surprised to see the urine of those who have eaten this fruit; fooled by the color and unaware of the secret, they gave out remedies to staunch the blood flow of a healthy man to the great merriment of the spectators, who were in on the joke. The name of Tenochtitlan comes from this fruit, nochtli, and from tetl, meaning stone. When it was settled, it was near a stone in the lake from which a very large nopal grew; therefore, in accordance with its name, Mexico has for its arms and insignia a single nopal emerging from a stone.

Some say the city was named for its first founder, Tenoch, second son of Iztacmixcoatl, whose sons and descendants, as I will recount below, populated the land of Anahuac that is now called New Spain. There are also those who think the name derives from the dye called nochiztli, which comes from [the cochineal insect that lives on] the same nopal thistle and nochtli fruit that give it its name. Because its color is very vivid, the Spaniards call it crimson, and it is quite expensive. No matter the origin of the name, the place and site are called Tenochtitlan, and the natives and residents are called Tenochca. As I said above, Mexico is not the entire city, but only one half, plus another district, although the Indians often say Mexico Tenochtitlan all together, and I believe this is how it is named in royal decrees. Mexico means "Spring," or "Where the Water Flows," according to the meaning of the term and language, and so they say that around it are many small fountains and natural springs from which the first settlers took the name. Others assert that it is called Mexico because the first founders were called Mexiti, and even today the inhabitants of that district and place are called Mexica. The Mexiti took their name from their main god and idol, called Mexitli, which is the same as Huitzilopochtli. Before the district of Mexico was settled, Tlatelolco already existed; as it was founded on a high and narrow piece of land in the lake, it was called by that name, meaning "small island," which comes from *tlatelli*, "island."[241]

As it is on the lake, Mexico Tenochtitlan is surrounded everywhere by fresh water. It can be entered by only three causeways; one from the west at a distance of half a league, one from the north at a distance of one league. On the east there is no causeway, but one enters by boat, and on the south is the last causeway, two leagues in length, which, as I said above, Cortés and his companions took. The lake in which Mexico sits is in fact two lakes, although it seems to be a single one. Each is very different from the other, because one has bitter, saline, and foul water where no fish can live, and the other has fresh water, with

241. Molina, 134v, has *altoçano* defined as *montón de tierra grande*, "small hill or large earthen mound."

some small fish. The salt lake rises and falls more frequently, following the wind that blows across it. The freshwater lake is on higher ground, and thus it flows into the foul water and not the reverse as some have thought. It passes through six or seven very large **openings** in the causeway separating the two lakes, covered by (f. 64) some beautiful wooden bridges. The salt lake is five leagues wide, eight to ten leagues long, and more than fifteen in its perimeter; the freshwater lake has similar dimensions. Thus, the entire lake covers more than thirty leagues, and it has within and on its shores more than fifty towns, many of them with five thousand houses, others with ten thousand. The city of Tetzcoco is as large as Mexico, and the water that collects in this basin that they call a lake comes from the heights of a mountain range surrounding it, which can be seen from the city [Mexico Tenochtitlan]. The water flows over saltpeter lands; this and no other reason, as many others believe, causes it to be salty. There is much trade in the salt extracted from the lake. On it travel two hundred thousand small boats that the natives call acalles, a term meaning "water houses," because *atl* is "water" and *calli* is "house." The Spaniards call them canoes, from the language of Cuba and Santo Domingo.[242] They have the shape of a trough made from a single log and can be large or small, depending on the size of the tree. Rather than exaggerate, I minimize their number, for, according to others, in Mexico alone there are typically fifty thousand [boats] to carry provisions and ferry people, filling the canals and the waters surrounding the city, especially on market days.

[Chapter 80]. The Marketplaces of Mexico

They call the markets tianquiztli, and each neighborhood and parish has a square for that purpose. Due to the cities' size, those of Mexico and Tlatelolco are very large, with one square in particular where a market is held almost daily, although markets are ordinarily held every fifth day, as I believe is the order and custom in all the kingdom and lands of Moteuczoma. The square is wide and long, enclosed by arcades and accommodates from sixty to one hundred thousand people buying and selling their wares. Since this is the capital of all the land, the market attracts the great number of people, boats, **and canoes** I mentioned from near and far, but mainly from all the towns on the lake.

Each trade and type of merchandise has a designated place that no one else may take or occupy, and this is no mean order. Since so many

242. The reference is to Taino, from which the term *canoa*, "canoe," was borrowed by the Spaniards.

people and goods cannot fit in the main square, they are distributed along the neighboring streets, particularly the **largest and** most bulky goods, such as stones, wood, lime, adobe bricks, and other finished and unfinished materials for construction. There are many mats—fine, coarse, and other sorts; charcoal; firewood and kindling; earthenware and all kinds of pottery, painted, glazed, and very beautiful, in all shapes, from jars to salt cellars; and tanned and untanned deer hides, with or without hair, dyed in many colors for the manufacture of shoes, shields, round shields, and leather coverings for wooden weapons. There are also hides from other animals and birds with their feathers (f. 64v) dressed and stuffed with grass **like straw**, some big, some small, all worth seeing because of their color and singularity. The most valued commodities are salt and cotton blankets, white, black, **blue**, and every color; some large, some small, some used as bed covers, some as mantas, and some as tapestries, breeches, shirts, head scarves, tablecloths, napkins, and many other things. There are also blankets made of metl leaves, **called *nequen***,[243] "palm," or "agave," and rabbit fur, which are of good value and warm; however, those of feathers are better. They sell yarn made of rabbit fur and cotton cloth, thread, and skeins, either white or dyed **in every color**. Most striking are the birds of prey brought to market, since besides consuming their meat [the people] wear the feathers and hunt other birds with them. There are countless numbers of birds, and who knows how many species and colors. There are tamed and untamed birds of prey and of the kinds that live in the air and water or on land.

The most beautiful artifacts sold in the square are the handiwork of gold and feathers with which they imitate objects in all colors. The Indians are such **ingenious** artisans that with feathers they can make butterflies, animals, trees, roses, flowers, herbs, and rocks so alike that they seem real, as if alive and natural. They sometimes go without eating the entire day as they are busy placing, removing, and arranging the feathers. They examine the work from all angles, against the sun, in the shadows, and in the half-light in order to determine whether the feathers look better straight, against the grain, or at a slant, face up, or on the reverse side. In short, the handiwork does not leave their hands until perfect. Few nations invest so much labor, especially those as impatient as ours. The most excellent and skilled craft is that of the silversmith. Thus, they bring to market well-wrought items, cast and with jewels. There is an octagonal plate, not welded, but cast and divided into four sections of

243. Nahuatl: *nequametl*, "another kind of palm tree"; Molina, 92, gives *henequen* as an alternative term.

alternating gold and silver. They make a small pot with a handle, the way we make bells here, but in one piece, and a fish with many gold and silver scales. They cast a parrot that moves its tongue, head, and wings, **so lifelike**. They cast a monkey that plays with its feet and head and holds a spindle in its hand as if spinning yarn or an apple as if eating it. Our Spaniards held these things in great esteem, since our silversmiths do not reach their level of excellence. They also enamel, mount, and dress emeralds, turquoise, and other jewels; and they bore pearls but not as well as we do here [in Spain].

Returning to the market, there are many kinds of feathers that are valuable, and gold, silver, copper, lead, brass, and tin, although there is little of the latter three metals. There are many pearls and stones, an extraordinary variety of shells and snails, both small and large, bones, pebbles, sponges, and other sorts of items. The many and varied baubles, trinkets, and charms of these Indians of Mexico are amusing. (f. 65) Worth considering are the herbs, roots, leaves, and seeds that they sell either as food or as medicine. The men, **women,** and children know much about herbs, since given their poverty and need they seek them to eat and treat their illnesses. They spend little on physicians, though they have them, and there are many pharmacists who bring to the square ointments, syrups, potions, and other trifles for the sick. They cure almost all their illnesses with herbs and even have a specific herb to kill lice.

The items that they sell for food are countless. There are few living things they do not eat. They have snakes without head or tail, barkless little dogs, castrated and fattened, moles, dormice, mice, earthworms, lice, and even dirt. At a certain time of the year they harvest with a **fine** net a curdlike substance from the surface of Mexico's lakes. It is neither plant, grass, nor soil, but something like scum. There is much of it, and they gather much of it. They mold it as people make salt, and there it dries and solidifies. They form it into cakes like bricks, **thin and square**, and they not only sell this at the market but they take it to other markets outside the city. They eat this as we eat cheese; and it has a slight taste of salt with *chilmolli*,[244] and is very tasty. They say this is used as bait, since it attracts so many birds that the lake frequently is covered with them in winter.

They sell venison whole and by the quarter, does, hares, [LdeG: rabbits], *tuzas*,[245] which are smaller than rabbits, dogs, and others that bark called *cuzatli*.[246] In sum, so many of these animals are bred and hunted

244. Molina, 21, has *chilmulli*, "salsa, or stew made of chilis."
245. *Toçan*, "gopher," in Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book II, *Earthly Things,* 16.
246. *Coçatli,* "weasel," in Molina, 23.

for the inns and taverns that serve ill-prepared food that it is shocking to see how much cooked and uncooked food is wasted. There are **also** meats and fish, grilled or boiled, with bread, pies, and omelettes from the eggs of many varieties of birds. There are countless prepared grains, in kernel and on the cob, which they sell along with broad beans, beans, and many other legumes. The many and varied fruits, either fresh or dried, that are sold at the market are innumerable. The most important fruit, which serves also as currency, is like an almond, which they call *cacahuatl*, "cacao beans, or beans." Our people call it cacao, as on the island of Cuba and Haiti.

The great amount and variety of dyes that they sell should not be forgotten, some of which we have here, but also many others, and good ones, that we lack. They make them from roses, flowers, fruits, roots, bark, stones, wood, and other things that are impossible to remember. There is syrup[247] (f. 65v) of centli, which is their wheat, of metl, and of other trees and things. This syrup is more valuable than grape syrup. There is *chia*[248] oil, from a seed that many people compare to mustard, and others to linseed, which is used to coat paintings to avoid water damage. They also make oil from other things they use in cooking and to coat food, although they prefer lard, grease, and tallow. The many kinds of wine that they make and sell will be mentioned later. I would never finish if I were to tell of everything they have for sale and of the artisans at the market: stove makers, barbers, cutlers, and many others whom many did not believe existed among these new men. All that I say, and many other things that I do not know and I omit, are sold in each of these markets in Mexico.

The merchants pay some fee as rights and sales taxes, or to be protected from thieves. Some alguaciles always go around the square and among the people; and in a house twelve elder men within everyone's sight settle suits, purchases, and sales, trading one thing for another as judges. One gives a turkey for a maize bundle, another exchanges mantas for salt, or money in the form of cacahuatl almonds that function as currency throughout the land. And this is the manner in which trading takes place. They have rates whereby they give so many cacao beans for a manta or a chicken. They have measurements by strings for things such as centli and feathers and of clay for things such as syrup and wine. If the quantities are falsified, they punish the offender and break the measuring equipment.

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247. LdeG uses *miel de abejas*, "bee honey," but we believe this designates a form of syrup made from maize and metl.

248. Molina, 19, defines this as "a type of seed from which they make oil."

[Chapter 81]. The Temple of Mexico

They call their temple teocalli, which means "house of god." The word is formed by *teotl*, which means "god," and calli, which means "house," a very appropriate term if theirs were the true God. The Spaniards who do not know this language call the temples cues, and they say Vchilobos instead of Huitzilopochtli. There are many temples in Mexica parishes and neighborhoods with towers that contain chapels with altars where the idols and the statues of their gods are placed. These serve as burial sites for the lords to whom they belong, since the commoners are buried in the ground around them. Since the courtyards are all built alike, or almost so, it is enough therefore to talk about the *Templo Mayor*, or "Great Temple." Inasmuch as this model conveys the general rule in the city and throughout the entire land, it is a new kind of temple, which I believe has only been seen and heard of here.

This temple was built on a square site, one crossbow-shot long from corner to corner. The stone enclosure has four gates that open to the principal streets, three coming from the mainland by the causeways that I mentioned before. On the side of the city that does not have a causeway, the fourth gate opens onto a very good street. A foundation made and carved of solid rock and filled with earth is in the middle of this area. It is aligned with the courtyard and is fifty brazas long from corner to corner. As the mound rises from ground level, it enlarges and has **very** large terraces. The structure narrows as it rises, and the terraces diminish correspondingly in such a way as resembles an Egyptian pyramid (f. 66) but without a point. Instead, it has a square top, of up to eight or ten brazas. The western side does not have terraces but [has] steps to go to the top, each step measuring one palmo. The steps totaled one hundred and thirteen or one hundred and fourteen. Since there are many steps, with tall **and handsomely carved** stones, it looked beautiful. It was quite a sight to see the priests climb up and down in some ceremony, or carrying a man to be sacrificed.

At the top there are two separate, great altars, and so close to the wall's edge and border that there was no more space than for a man to comfortably pass behind. One of the altars is to the right, the other to the left. They were no taller than five palmos. Each had its stone walls painted with ugly and monstrous images. The chapel was very beautiful and well wrought with woodwork. Each chapel had three lofts, one above the other, very high and with recessed walls. The chapel rose up from the pyramid and gave the appearance of a very large, colorful tower that could be seen from a great distance. From there it was possible to see and contemplate at leisure the entire city and the lake with its towns.

It was the best and most beautiful view in the world. When he showed them the temple, **King** Moteuczoma brought Cortés and the rest of the Spaniards up so they could see it. From the top of the stairs to the altars there was a small square that easily gave the priests enough room to celebrate their services. The entire town looked and prayed toward the sunrise, which is the reason why they build their main temples in this manner. On each of the altars there was a very large idol.

Without counting this tower made up of the chapels above the temple, there were forty or more small and large towers on other small teocalli located in its precinct. Although they were built alike, they did not face east but rather other directions in order to distinguish them from the Templo Mayor. Some were larger than others, and each was dedicated to a different god. Among them there was a round teocalli devoted to the God of Air, called Quetzalcoatl because as air circles about the sky so they built it a round temple. Its entrance was through a diabolically painted door made like the mouth of a serpent. It had fangs and teeth in high relief that astonished all those who entered, and especially the Christians, who took it as a vision of hell. There were other temples or cues in the city with ascending steps on three sides and some that had small temples on each corner. All these temples had individual houses with their own separate service, priests, and deities.

Next to each of the four gates opening onto the Templo Mayor's courtyard, there is a large room surrounded by ample, good chambers, both tall and shallow, and **all** filled with arms. These were public and common houses; the temples are the fortresses (f. 66v) and strongholds of each town, which is why they have ammunition and storehouses there. There were another three rooms next to each other of equal height, with large painted stone walls, wooden beams, and idols. They had many chapels or chambers with small doors that were very dark inside, with countless idols, large and small, made of various materials. They were all coated with blood and were black from the blood smeared and sprayed on them whenever they sacrificed someone. Even the walls were encrusted with blood two fingers thick and the floor eight inches deep. The rooms stank noxiously, but nevertheless the priests **and ministers of the devil** entered daily. Only important people were allowed inside, and even they must offer up a man for sacrifice. There is a great reservoir that allows the executioners and ministers of the devil to wash the blood of sacrificed men, to water down, and to supply the kitchens and the chickens. The reservoir is filled by a pipe that comes from their main water source. The rest in the large square area, which is empty and uncovered, comprises the stockyard where they breed birds and cultivate herb gardens, trees, fragrant rosebushes, and flowers for

their altars. So large and strange a temple was this of **the great city of** Mexico, as was said.

For the sake of their false gods, as these men were deceived, five thousand people reside continuously in the temple, **all of them to service the gods**. They sleep inside and they eat at the expense of the **great** idol, which is very wealthy because it has many towns paying **tribute and service** for its maintenance and repair, as they are obligated to keep it standing always. By arrangement they plant and harvest, sustaining all these people with bread, and there is enough fruit, meat, fish, and firewood as is needed; and more is needed here than at the palace. Even with all this burden and tribute, they lived restfully and ultimately as vassals of their gods, as they said. **King** Moteuczoma took Cortés **with all the Spaniards** to the temple so the Spaniards could see these things and to show them their religion and **false** sanctity. We will talk about it later in more latitude **and more extensively**, being the strangest and cruelest religion **that you have heard or was known among the nations of the world**.

[Chapter 82]. The Idols of Mexico

The gods of Mexico were two thousand according to what they say, but the main ones were called Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipoca. Their idols were located in the highest place of the teocalli on two altars that were made from a **solid block of** stone. Having the width, height, and size of a giant, the idols were covered with mother of pearl, many pearls, precious stones, and gold pieces (f. 67) mounted with *tzacotli*[249] paste. They had birds, snakes, animals, fish, and flowers fashioned like a mosaic with turquoise, emeralds, chalcedony, amethysts, and other small, fine stones that made an attractive work, showcasing the mother of pearl. They each had large gold snakes as belts, ten gold human hearts as necklaces, and each had a mask **also** made of gold, with eyes of mirrors, and at the back a deathly grimace, all with meaning and reason. These two were brothers, Tezcatlipoca, God of Providence, and Huitzilopochtli, God of War, who was worshiped and feared more than all the rest. Another very large idol was above the chapel of the aforementioned idols. Some say that this was the main and best of their gods and that it was made of every kind of seed that can be found on earth, which they eat. They grind and knead the seeds mixed with the blood of innocent children and virgin girls who are sacrificed by opening their chests in order to offer the hearts as first fruits to the idol.

249. Nahuatl: *tzacutli*, "thick glue"; Molina, 151v.

The priests and ministers of the temple consecrated [the temples] with great pomp and ceremony. The entire city and **town** [LdeG: land] were present at the consecration with incredible joy and devotion. Many pious people approached to touch the idol by hand after it had been blessed and to place in the seed dough precious stones, gold disks, and other jewels and body ornaments. Afterward, no secular person was allowed to touch it or enter its chapel, nor any priest save for the *tlamacaztli*,[250] who is the main priest. They renovated the idol from time to time, breaking the old one into fragments. Whoever was able to have **or obtain** a piece of it as a relic or for pious acts was blessed, especially warriors. A certain container of water was also blessed along with the idol, with much ceremony and many words. They religiously made certain to keep it at the base of the altar in order to consecrate the king during his coronation and bless the captain general by having him drink from it when he was chosen for some war.

[Chapter 83]. The Skull Rack that the Mexica Had as a Reminder of Death

Outside the temple and in front of the main gate, although farther than a stone's throw, there was a skull rack with the heads of men captured in war and sacrificed by knife. It was shaped like a theater, longer than it was wide, and made of stone masonry with tiers where the skulls were inset between stones with their teeth showing. [LdeG: The theater was flanked by two towers made of limestone and skulls facing outward.] Since the walls did not show any stones or other material, they were strange and colorful. At the top of the theater there were seventy or more tall beams, separated from one another by about four or five palmos, and the space was filled with as many poles as they could fit from top to bottom, leaving some space between them. These poles crossed through the beams, and each third of a pole had five (f. 67v) heads pierced through the temples. Andrés de Tapia, who told me about this, counted the heads with Gonzalo de Umbria one day and found one hundred and thirty-six thousand skulls on the poles and stone rows, but they were unable to count those on the towers; [it is] a cruel custom since they were the heads of men beheaded in sacrifice, even though it appears **inhumane** [LdeG: humane] for it brings death to mind. There are **or were** also people in charge of replacing the skulls as soon as one fell, thus their number always remained the same.

250. Nahuatl: *tlamacazqui*; Molina, 125.

[Chapter 84]. Cortés Takes Moteuczoma Prisoner

Upon entering [Mexico Tenochtitlan], **Captain** Hernando Cortés and the Spaniards spent six days observing the city and investigating its secrets. They saw noteworthy things, some that we have mentioned and others that we will discuss later. **King** Moteuczoma, his court and warriors, and other people visited them often. [The Spaniards] were plentifully provided for, as on the first day, and equally so were the Indian **friends** accompanying them. [The Mexica] gave the horses barley and fresh grass, which is available year round. They also gave them flour, grain, flowers, and anything else that their owners requested, even making them beds of flowers. Although well treated and feeling exultant to be in such a wealthy land where they could fill their purses, not all [the Spaniards] were content or happy. Some were afraid and concerned, especially **Captain** Cortés, who as their head and leader had the responsibility to watch over and protect his companions. Cortés became very pensive on seeing the place, the people, and the greatness of Mexico. He saw the distress of many Spaniards who came to him bringing news about the stronghold and the trap they had fallen into. It seemed impossible to escape from there, and even more so should any day **King** Moteuczoma or the city turn against them, and each resident aim a stone at them, break the bridges on the causeways, or stop giving them food. They were all easy actions for the Indians to take, **if they decided to do so.**

Needing to protect his Spaniards, remedy the danger they were in, and eliminate any impediment to his desire, Cortés decided to arrest **King** Moteuczoma **(truly a daring action)** and to build four vessels in order to seize control of the lake and its boats in case something should occur. I believe that he had made these plans before entering the city, thinking that men in water are like fish on land, and that without taking the king prisoner they could not seize the kingdom. He could have built the boats first, an easy thing to do, but he postponed this until later so as not to delay the king's imprisonment, which was a key step and essential to the whole affair. Thus, he decided without notifying anyone to arrest him at once. The opportunity or pretext that Cortés found to do so was the killing of nine Spaniards by (f. 68) **the courageous Lord** Qualpopoca. [Cortés] had already dared to write the emperor, saying that he would arrest [Moteuczoma] and assume power over Mexico and its empire. Cortés then took the letters that Captain Pedro de Ircio had sent him blaming Qualpopoca for the deaths of the nine Spaniards in order to show them to King Moteuczoma. When he finished reading them, he put them in his pouch and walked about alone a great while, pondering the momentous deed he was about to

undertake, which even he considered a great risk despite its being necessary for his plan.

During his walk, he noticed a wall in one of the rooms that was whiter than the others. On coming closer he observed that it had been recently whitewashed and was a door now sealed with rocks and limestone. Calling two servants, since the others were already sleeping for it was **mid**night, he had it opened and entered inside, where he found many rooms. He was astonished at the great quantity of idols, feathers, stones, silver, and all the gold that he found in some of the rooms and marveled at so much elegance **and wealth**. Closing the door with great care, he left without touching a single thing so as not to offend Moteuczoma, disrupt his arrest, or remove what was already in place.

The next morning, some Spaniards along with many Indians came from Tlaxcala to warn that the people of the city were conspiring to kill them and planned to destroy the causeway bridges to carry this out. With the news, whether false or true, Cortés left half the Spaniards to safeguard and watch his quarters, placed many others at the street crossings, and ordered the remaining men to go surreptitiously to the palace in groups of two, three, and four, as they thought best. He told them that he wished to talk to **King** Moteuczoma about matters of life and death. They did as they were told, and he went straight to Moteuczoma, **but** concealing his weapons, as they did. **King** Moteuczoma came out to greet him and took him into his throne room. Up to thirty Spaniards entered with him; the rest remained at the door and in the courtyard. As was his custom, **Captain** Cortés greeted Moteuczoma, who then began to joke and entertain him as he had done in the past.

Pleased with the conversation and unaware of what was about to befall him, Moteuczoma happily gave Cortés many gold jewels, one of his daughters, and some other lords' daughters for the Spaniards. Cortés accepted them so as not to upset him, who would otherwise have taken affront. Cortés, however, stated that he was married and could not take Moteuczoma's daughter as his wife, as Christian law did not allow a man more than one wife under penalty of infamy and branding on the forehead. He then showed him the letters he carried from Pedro de Ircio and had them read to him. Cortés complained that Qualpopoca had killed so many Spaniards under Moteuczoma's direct orders and that his people had announced that they wished to kill the Spaniards and **destroy and** wreck the bridges. Moteuczoma strongly denied both accusations, saying (f. 68v) that the allegation against his vassals was a lie and that the wicked Qualpopoca had fabricated a huge falsehood. Infuriated, he immediately called some of his servants and ordered them to summon Qualpopoca to prove to Cortés that he was in the right. He gave them a

stone **with** [LdeG: as] the royal seal and an image of Huitzilopochtli that he carried on his arm.

The messengers left instantly, and **Captain** Cortés informed **King** Moteuczoma, "My Lord, it is advisable that Your Highness should come with me to my chamber and remain there until the messengers return and bring Qualpopoca to clarify the deaths of my Spaniards. There you will be treated and served and will rule as you do here. Do not worry, since I will look after your honor and your person as if it were my own, or that of my king. Forgive me **Your Highness** for acting in this manner; but I cannot do otherwise. If I overlooked this, my companions would **become upset and** angry with me for not protecting and defending them. Therefore, Your Highness must order your people to not be distressed, **scandalized**, or rebellious. Know, **Lord**, that any evil that befalls us you must pay with your life, which depends on your leaving quietly without provoking the people, **certainly a frightening thing**."

Greatly disturbed, King Moteuczoma stated gravely, "My personage is not to be arrested; and even should I so desire, my people would not tolerate it." Cortés replied, and Moteuczoma countered, arguing for more than four hours. Finally, Moteuczoma agreed to leave on the condition that he would continue to rule and govern. Moteuczoma ordered that a room be properly furnished at the house and courtyard of the Spaniards and retired there with Cortés. Many **great** lords came and removed their garments, draping them over their arms. Barefoot and weeping, they carried [Moteuczoma] in a lavish litter. As the news spread that the Spaniards had taken the king prisoner, the entire city began to revolt. However, **their lord** Moteuczoma comforted **all** those crying for him and commanded the others, saying that he was neither imprisoned nor went against his will but entirely with his consent.

Cortés assigned Moteuczoma a Spanish guard under the command of a captain in charge of the daily changing of the guard. There were always Spaniards with him who entertained and delighted him. He enjoyed their conversation very much and always gifted them with **his treasures**. His own people served him there as in his palace, and he was also served by the Spaniards **who treated him with much respect** and could not think of a pleasure that they would not grant him. Cortés accorded him every favor, continually begging him not to worry and allowing him to pass sentence on disputes, take care of business, and occupy himself with the government of his (f. 69) kingdoms as before. He also allowed him to speak in public and in private with any of his people. This was the bait offered Moteuczoma and all his Indians so they would swallow the hook. No Greek or Roman nor any nation since the time there were kings ever executed what Hernando Cortés did in

arresting the most powerful King Moteuczoma in his own house, fortified by innumerable people with only four hundred and fifty **Spaniards and** [Indian] **allies** [LdeG: companions].

[Chapter 85]. Moteuczoma's Hunt

Not only did Moteuczoma enjoy all the mentioned freedom while in the house and hands of the Spaniards, but Cortés also allowed him to leave any time he wished to go hunting or to the temple, for Moteuczoma was a devout man and a hunter. When he went hunting, he was carried on the shoulders of **valiant** men and brought eight or ten Spaniards to guard his person and three thousand Mexica including lords, gentlemen, servants, and hunters.

He had a great number of hunters, some for tracking, others for beating the bushes, others for falconry. The trackers wait for hares, rabbits, and iguanas, and with their bows they shoot stags, deer, wolves, foxes, and other animals such as coyotes. They are **very deft** marksmen, especially if they are Teochichimeca who are humiliated when they miss their shot from a distance of less than eighty pasos. When he ordered the beating of the bushes, it was quite a spectacle to see the people who gathered for this and the hunting and killing with their hands, sticks, nets, and bows. They hunt tame and fierce animals and dreadful ones such as lions, tigers, and some like lynx that look like **wild** cats. The capture of a lion in this manner is a sight **to see**, since it is dangerous prey, and those who do so have few weapons and little defense, although artfulness serves them better than force.

Even more astonishing is how Moteuczoma's hunters capture birds in flight by beating the bushes. They have such mastery and skill that they can capture any bird in the air no matter how fierce and swift, and do so even **more** expertly when Moteuczoma commands it. This happened one day when he was with the Spaniards who were guarding him in a corridor. Seeing a sparrow hawk, one of the Spaniards commented, "What a fine hawk! I wish I could have it." The king then called some servants who were professional hunters, ordering them to follow the hawk and bring it to him. They pursued the bird, putting in so much effort and skill that they brought it to him, and he gave it to the Spaniards. This is a true story, one corroborated by many by word of mouth and in writing. It would be madness for a king such as Moteuczoma to give this order, and foolishness for the servants to obey him, were they unable to carry it out, unless we wish to believe that he did so in order to show off his greatness and out of pride. In this case hunters could have brought

another ferocious hawk and sworn it to be the same one that he ordered captured. If the [first] story is true, (f. 69v) as they claim, I would rather praise those who captured the hawk than he who gave the order.

The main pastime during these excursions was hawking for herons, kites, crows, magpies, and other birds, both strong and weak, large and small, and birds of prey such as eagles and vultures that they and we both have, which fly to the clouds, and some that kill hares and wolves, and, according to what they say, stags. Others hunted with nets, snares, baits, and other devices. Moteuczoma was very good at shooting ferocious animals with bow and arrow, and he was **even more** precise when aiming at birds with a blowgun.

The houses where he would go were country houses, and the woods that I mentioned before were at least two leagues outside the city. Although he sometimes organized parties and banquets there for the Spaniards and the lords **and noblemen** who accompanied him, he never failed to come back at night to sleep in **his** house **and palace, where Captain Cortés resided**, nor did he fail to give something to the Spaniards who accompanied him daily. When Cortés saw how liberally and cheerfully Moteuczoma gave them gifts, he told **the king** that the Spaniards had behaved imprudently by searching the house and taking gold that they had found in some rooms **of the palace**. He then asked Moteuczoma how he wished to handle the situation. Moteuczoma answered magnanimously, "Those things belong to the gods of the city, **and they have no importance**; but leave the feathers and things not made of gold and silver. Everything else you may take for yourself and your men, and if you want more, I will give it to you."

[Chapter 86]. How Cortés Destroyed the Idols of Mexico

Moteuczoma would most often go to the temple on foot, leaning on one of the two attendants who supported him by the arms. A lord walked ahead of them with three tall staffs in his hand, conveying the king's presence and as a sign of justice and authority. If he traveled by litter, he held one of the staffs in his hand as he stepped down, or if by foot I believe that he carried it always as kings here [in Spain] carry the **royal** scepter. He was ceremonious in all his actions and service, the most important aspects of which have been indicated **previously**, from the time that Cortés entered Mexico to the present.

Since the first days of the Spaniards' arrival and whenever Moteuczoma went to the temple, men were killed in sacrifice. In order to put a stop to such cruelty and sin in the presence of the Spaniards, who had

to accompany Moteuczoma, Cortés warned him that he would topple the idols before him and all his people. However, Moteuczoma answered that he should not consider it, as the entire town would riot and rise up in arms to defend and guard their ancient religion and the good gods who gave them water, bread, health, light, and all things necessary. Cortés and the Spaniards accompanied Moteuczoma **and his lords** the first time that he went (f. 70) to the temple after his arrest. Upon entering, Cortés from one direction and his men from the other, the Spaniards began to topple the idols from the seats and altars where they were placed in the chapels and chambers. **King** Moteuczoma was deeply disturbed and his people were alarmed. They wished to take up arms and kill the Spaniards on the spot. However, Moteuczoma ordered them to remain quiet and begged Cortés to desist from such insolence. He did so since it seemed to him that the time was not propitious, nor did he have the necessary means to succeed. Instead, he spoke the following to them through his interpreters:

[Chapter 87]. Cortés's Speech to the People of Mexico About the Idols

Most Sovereign King, Nobles, Lords, and Priests,

All the people of the world, you who are here or we there in Spain and in any part of the world where one might live, share the same beginning and end. Our origin and lineage come from God, almost directly from Him. Our bodies are all made in the same likeness, and we are all equal in our souls and senses. Thus, without a doubt we are all made similarly in body and soul, and what is more, we are all related by blood. However, by **the** God **who made us** some are born beautiful and others ugly; some are wise and discreet, while others foolish and lacking in understanding and judgment and unable to act virtuously. Therefore it is just, holy, and reasonable and **the true** God's will that the wise and virtuous should teach and instruct the ignorant. They should guide the blind who stray so that they may be led to salvation along the path of **our** true religion. Therefore, I and my companions wish and seek much good and betterment for you, all the more so as we are compelled and constrained by kinship, friendship, and hospitality, conditions that oblige one anywhere.

As you know, a person's life consists of three things: body, soul, and property. Regarding the last, which is the least, we want nothing and have taken nothing, save what you have given us. We have not laid a hand on your person or that of your children or women, nor do we wish to do so. We seek only your soul for the sake of its salvation, to which we here manifest knowledge of the true God.

No one who possesses natural reason would deny the existence of God, although out of ignorance he may say there are many gods or may fail to recognize the true **Almighty** God. But I affirm and attest that there is no other but our Christian God, who is one, eternal, without beginning or end, the Creator and the Ruler of all things created. He alone made the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars that you worship. He alone created the sea with its fishes and the earth with its animals, birds, plants, stones, metals, and such things that you blindly take for gods. After having created all things with His own hands, He likewise fashioned a man (f. 70v) and a woman, and after forming them He infused them with a soul and bestowed on them the world, revealing to them paradise and glory. Furthermore, we all come from that man and that woman, as I said at the beginning, and so we are all kin and creatures of God, and even His children. If we wish to return to our Father, we must **know Him and** act as good human beings, devout, pious, innocent, and redeemable. But you cannot be any of these things if you worship statues **of stone or wood** or kill men. Instead, consider whether there is one man among you who wishes to be killed. No, of course not! Then, why do you kill others with such cruelty? If you are unable to create a soul, why do you destroy one? And none among you can make a soul or fashion bodies of flesh and bone. If we could, none of us would be childless, and everyone would have as many big, good, **beautiful,** and virtuous children as he or she wishes. As I say, it is our God in Heaven who grants them as He pleases to whom He pleases, and for this reason you should accept, embrace, and worship Him as **Almighty** God.

He brings rain, calms the weather, and makes the sun shine so that the earth can produce bread, fruit, plants, birds, and animals for our sustenance. These are not given to you by the hard stones or dry pieces of wood or cold metals or tiny seeds that your young men and slaves make with their dirty hands into these **false** images, ugly statues, and horrifying **figures** that you worship in vain. Oh, how charming the gods and how poised the priests. You worship what is made by hands from which you would not eat what they cook or touch. Do you believe that which does not rot, decay, age, or lacks feeling and cannot kill or cure can be gods? Therefore, there is no reason to keep these idols here or to perform more killings or prayers before them, because they are deaf, mute, and blind. Do you wish to know the true **Almighty** God and learn where He is? Raise your eyes to the sky and you will understand that there abides a deity who moves the heavens, rules the course of the sun, governs the earth, supplies the sea, and provides men and even animals with water and bread. That God whom you can now imagine inside your hearts is the one you should serve and worship, not

by killing men or offering blood or dreadful sacrifices **as you do**, but solely with your devotion and prayers as we Christians do. You should know that we have come here to teach you these things.

Cortés appeased the priests' and citizens' ire with his reasoning. He toppled the idols, preemptively putting an end to them. Moteuczoma agreed not to replace them, to sweep and clean the stinking blood in the chapels, to sacrifice no more men, and to allow Cortés to place a crucifix and an (f. 71) image of Santa María on the altars of the main chapel where they climb the one hundred fourteen steps that I mentioned earlier. Moteuczoma and his people promised not to kill anyone in sacrifice and to keep the cross and image of our Lady on the condition that they would leave standing the idols of his gods that had not yet been toppled. Thus, Cortés agreed, and they kept their word, and afterward they never sacrificed men, at least not in public or in such a way that the Spaniards would know about it. So they placed the crosses and images of our Lady and other saints among their idols, but they retained a mortal hatred and rancor toward the Spaniards that they could not keep hidden for long. Cortés gained more honor and glory with this Christian deed than had he vanquished them in battle.

[Chapter 88]. The Burning of Qualpopoca and Other Noblemen

Twenty days after Moteuczoma's arrest, the servants he had sent with his orders carrying his royal seal, returned. They brought Qualpopoca, one of his sons, and another fifteen principales, who, according to an inquiry, were guilty of having participated in the conspiracy to kill the Spaniards. Qualpopoca entered Mexico with a large company, as the great lord that he was, carried on a richly outfitted litter borne on the shoulders of his vassals and servants. He soon **saw and** spoke with Moteuczoma and was then turned over to Cortés along with his son and the fifteen noblemen.

Cortés took them aside and interrogated them after their arrest. They confessed to having killed the Spaniards in battle. Asked whether he was a vassal of Moteuczoma, Qualpopoca answered, "Well, is there any other lord whose vassal I could be?" implying that there was no other. Cortés told him, "Much greater is the king of those Spaniards you killed without risk and by treason, and for which you will pay." He interrogated them more severely a second time and then all confessed **in unison** how they had killed two Spaniards following the order and persuasion of their great Lord Moteuczoma as well as by their own initiative. They had legitimately killed the rest of the Spaniards because of their attacks on their houses and land.

Cortés sentenced and condemned them to be burned, since they admitted their guilt. Thus, they were burned publicly in the main square before all the townspeople without commotion; rather, they stood in complete silence and fear of the new kind of justice they saw being meted out by the guests and foreigners against such an illustrious lord in Moteuczoma's kingdom.

[Chapter 89]. The Reason Qualpopoca Was Burned

Cortés had ordered Pedro de Ircio to attempt settlement in the region where Almería is now located in order to prevent Francisco de Garay from going inland there, since [Garay] had already been driven from that coast. **So** Ircio requested the Indians **of those provinces** to be their friends and to turn themselves over to the emperor. **However**, Qualpopoca, who was lord of Nauhtla, or the five villages now called Almería, sent word to Pedro de Ircio that he could not follow his directive because he had enemies along the way, but that he would come if he sent him a Spaniard to (f. 71v) safeguard the road since no one would dare bother him.

Ircio sent him four **Spaniards**, believing him, and because he wanted to settle there. Upon entering the land of Nauhtla, many armed men came out to attack them and rejoiced in killing two Spaniards. The other two escaped, wounded, to tell the news in Veracruz. Thinking that Qualpopoca was responsible, Pedro de Ircio marched with fifty Spaniards and ten thousand Indians from Cempoala, bringing two horses that he had and two pieces of artillery. When Qualpopoca learned of the Spaniards' actions, he came out with a great army to evict them from his land. He fought so well against them that he killed seven Spaniards and many Cempoalteca. However, in the end he was vanquished, his land devastated, his town sacked, and many of his men killed or captured. Those **who had been captured** told how Qualpopoca had done all these things by order of the great lord Moteuczoma. It might have been also that [the Spaniards] took their confession at the time of their deaths, and others said that in order to exculpate themselves they were putting the blame on the peoples of Mexico. Pedro de Ircio wrote about what transpired to Cortés when he was in Cholola, and it was because of these letters that Cortés went to arrest Moteuczoma, as was already said.

[Chapter 90]. How Cortés Shackled Moteuczoma

Before **Qualpopoca** was led to the stake, Cortés told Moteuczoma that Qualpopoca and the others had stated and sworn that they had killed the

two Spaniards because of his directives. This was wrong because they were Moteuczoma's friends and guests. If he had not respected his love for Moteuczoma, things could have turned out differently. He put him in shackles, saying that according to the law of God, he who kills deserves to die. Cortés did this so that he would better occupy his mind with his own troubles and not those of others. Moteuczoma became deathly pale. He was shaken and horrified by the shackles, a thing unheard of for a king. He claimed he was guiltless, that he knew nothing of the charges. Later the same day, after Qualpopoca had been burned at the stake, Cortés removed the shackles, granting him freedom to return to his palace.

Rejoicing over his freedom, Moteuczoma thanked Cortés for the courtesy. Afterward he did not wish to leave, either because he assumed it was all words and flattery or because he feared that once his people saw him out of the Spaniards' grasp they might kill him for allowing himself to be captured and held in such a manner. He added that if he left, his people would make him rebel and kill Cortés and the Spaniards. Moteuczoma must have been a cowardly and insignificant man to have allowed himself to be taken prisoner and never attempt to regain his freedom, despite Cortés's offer and his people's begging him to accept. Yet he was so respected that no one in Mexico dared to harm the Spaniards so as not to upset him. Indeed, Qualpopoca had traveled the distance of seventy leagues because he was told of his lord's summons and shown the image of his seal. Even at many leagues distant, everyone complied with what he wished and ordered.

(f. 72) [Chapter 91]. Cortés Orders a Search for Gold in Many Places

Cortés ardently wished to know the extent of Moteuczoma's dominions and rule and of his relations with neighboring kings and lords. He also wished to gather a good amount of gold in order to send it to Spain for the emperor's fifth, along with a complete account of the land, the peoples, and his exploits. He therefore implored Moteuczoma to tell of and show him to the mines where he and his people extracted gold and silver. Moteuczoma replied that it would please him to do so, and then appointed eight Indians, four of whom were silversmiths and experienced in mining and four who knew the land where he intended to send them. He commanded them to go in groups of two to four provinces, which are Çozollan, Malinaltepec, Tenich, and Tutepec,[251] with another eight

251. LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 179, uses Zuzolla (Zacatula?), Malinaltepec, Tenich (Chinantla), and Tututepec. Gerhard, *Guide*, locates both a Malinaltepec and a Tamazollapan in the district of Teposcolula (Oaxaca) and a Sosola north of Antequera (Oaxaca)

Spaniards whom Cortés sent to learn about the rivers and gold deposits and to bring back samples **of gold**.

The eight Indians and eight Spaniards[252] left carrying Moteuczoma's standards. Those who went to Sosula, which is located eighty leagues from Mexico and is part of his domain, were shown three rivers with gold, and from these they obtained few samples, since the natives extract small amounts, for they are not greedy and lack the necessary tools and dexterity. In order to get there and return, they traversed three densely populated provinces with good buildings and fertile land. The people in the province named Tamazolapan are very intelligent and better dressed than the Mexica. Those who went to Malinaltepec, seventy leagues away, also brought back samples of gold that the natives extract from a great river crossing the province.

Those who went to Tenich, located upstream from Malinaltepec, where a different language is spoken, were not allowed to enter or obtain answers to their questions because the lord, called Coatelicamatl,[253] did not recognize Moteuczoma's authority or his friendship and thought they had come to spy. However, once he learned who the Spaniards were, he told the Mexica to leave his land and the Spaniards to carry out the commission entrusted to them so they could report back to their captain. When the people from Mexico saw this, they tried to turn the Spaniards against them by saying that the lord was mean and cruel and would kill them. Our men had some doubts about speaking with Coatlicamatl, which were justified by what their Indian companions had told them and because the local people were armed and carried lances twenty-five palmos long, with some even thirty palmos long. They finally entered because it would have been cowardly not to, and it would have brought suspicion on them, prompting their deaths.

Coatlicamatl received them very well and let them see seven or eight rivers where in their presence gold was extracted and samples given to them to take back. He sent ambassadors to Cortés, offering his land and his person and some mantas and gold jewels. Cortés was happier with the embassy than with the gift, for he saw that Moteuczoma's enemies sought his friendship. Moteuczoma and his people were not very pleased because Coatlicamatl, while not a great lord, ruled over a warlike people and rough mountainous land.

The others went to Tututepec, which is close to the sea, and twelve

(283–85). Zozollan would thus be Sosola (and hereinafter) (48), and Malinaltepec would be located about twelve leagues directly to the north of Oaxaca City (258). Finally, Tutepec would be Tuxtepec in the jurisdiction of Teutila and toward the Gulf Coast (301).

252. C. reverses LdeG's order here and puts the Indians before the Spaniards.

253. LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 180, has Coatlicamatl (and hereinafter).

leagues away from Malinaltepec. They returned with gold samples from two rivers that they had explored and with news of the land's suitability for a mining camp and gold extraction. For this reason Cortés requested that Moteuczoma establish a mine in the emperor's name. (f. 72v) Moteuczoma then ordered some officials and workers to go there, and within two months a large house was built with three small houses around it for service, a fishpond with five hundred ducks for feathers that were to be plucked several times a year for mantas, fifteen hundred turkeys, and so many interior furnishings and decorations in all the house that they were worth 20,000 castellanos. There were also ninety-six bushels of centli, ten of beans, and two thousand seedlings of cacahuatl or cacao trees, which grow very well around there. This enterprise was initiated but not completed due to the arrival of Pánfilo de Narváez and the riot in Mexico that soon followed.

Cortés also asked Moteuczoma to tell him whether his lands located on the seacoast [to the east] had a good port where the Spanish vessels would be safe. He answered that he did not know, but would ask or send someone to find out. [Moteuczoma] thus had painted on a cotton cloth the entire coast with the rivers, coves, and capes of his lands. No port, inlet, or safe place appeared on the entire canvas, except for a large cove located between the mountains now called San Martín and San Antón in the province of Coatzacoalco. The Spanish pilots thought this to be a strait leading to the Moluccas and the spice trade, but although they were wrong, they believed what they wished.

Cortés appointed ten Spaniards, all of them pilots and seamen, to go with Moteuczoma's men, since he also paid for the cost of the journey. The ten Spaniards left with Moteuczoma's servants and ended up in Chalchicueyecan, where they had originally disembarked, and which is now called San Juan de Ulúa. They covered seventy leagues of coast without finding a single cove or river deep and good enough for the vessels, although they explored many. On the Spaniards' arrival at Coatzacoalco, the lord of that river and province, called Tuchintle**tzin**, even though he was an enemy of Moteuczoma's, received the Spaniards because he had already heard about them from their stop at Potonchan. He gave them some boats to survey and sound the river. They measured it and, finding that it was six brazas at its deepest part, traveled upstream about twelve leagues. The land along the riverbank has many large settlements and is apparently fertile. In addition, Tuchintletl sent Cortés some gold items, stones, garments made of cotton, feathers, leather, and *trigues*[254] with the Spaniards. He also sent word that he wanted to be friends with the

254. Possibly *tigres*, "tiger skins."

emperor and pay yearly tribute on the condition that the peoples of Colhua would not enter his land.

This embassy and the river's discovery greatly pleased Cortés, since the mariners had said there was no good river from the Río Grijalva all the way to the Río Pánuco, although I believe they were mistaken. Cortés reciprocated with Spanish gifts for Tuchintle**tzin**, sending some Spaniards back to learn in full of his intentions and the suitability of the land and harbor. Since they returned from the trip very satisfied and certain about everything, Cortés then dispatched Juan Velázquez de León as captain of one hundred and fifty Spaniards to settle and build a fortress.

[Chapter 92]. The Imprisonment of **King** Cacamatzin of Tetzcoco

(f. 73) Either Moteuczoma's timidity or his love for Cortés and the Spaniards compelled his men not only to complain but to organize new plots and rebellions, especially his nephew Cacamatzin, **king and natural** lord of Tetzcoco. A violent, arrogant youth, he resented his uncle's imprisonment, and as he saw that it lasted for some time, he asked Cortés to release [Moteuczoma] so he could be a lord and not a slave. Seeing that Cortés was unwilling, he mutinied and threatened to kill the Spaniards. Some said he did so to avenge his uncle's dishonor; others, to make himself lord of Mexico; yet others, to kill the Spaniards. Whether for the first or second reason, or for all, he soon armed himself and gathered many of his people as well as friends, which he did not lack, given Moteuczoma's imprisonment and their feelings against the Spaniards. He made it known that he wanted to release Moteuczoma from captivity and expel the Spaniards from the land or kill and eat them. This was terrible news for our men, but not even this blustering intimidated Cortés; rather, he attempted to wage war and lay siege on Cacama in his house and town. But Moteuczoma blocked him, saying that Tetzcoco was well fortified and surrounded by water. Besides, Cacama was proud and tumultuous and had all the Colhuaque on his side, since he was lord of Colhuacan[255] and Otompa.[256] As theirs was a mighty army, he thought it better to lead Cacama along a different path.

Counseled by Moteuczoma, Cortés launched a scheme by sending word to Cacama to remember the friendship that existed between the two since the time [Cacama] had welcomed him to Mexico and that

255. Acolhuacan (and hereinafter).

256. Otumba (and hereinafter). Gerhard, *Guide*, 207–8, describes Otumba as a "satellite state of the Acolhuaque" of Tetzcoco. It is northeast of Tetzcoco, toward Cempoala.

peace was always better than war for a man with vassals. He should set aside his arms, for, though [weapons are] a temptation to those who have not yet wielded them, his compliance would give great pleasure and service to the king of Spain. Cacama responded that he was no friend to anyone who dishonored him or took away his kingdom, and that the war he wished to wage would indeed favor his vassals, defending their lands and religious beliefs. Before setting aside his arms, he would avenge his uncle and his gods; and he did not want to hear who the king of Spain was nor did he wish to learn about him. Cortés admonished and warned him many times over, and as he did not listen, he had Moteuczoma call him to Mexico to put an end to his differences and anger against the Spaniards and to become friends with Cortés.

Cacama answered bitterly that if Moteuczoma had any honor, he would not be imprisoned or a captive of four strangers who, with their sweet words, had bewitched him and usurped his kingdom. Neither the Mexica religion nor the gods of the Colhuaque would have been humbled and trampled by bandits and impostors, nor the glory and fame of his ancestors stained or lost by his cowardice and timidity. In order to restore their religion, make amends to the gods, protect the kingdom, and regain his and Mexico's fame and liberty, he would willingly go, not with his hands on his chest, wrongly, but with his sword to kill the Spaniards who had so damaged and diminished the Colhua nation. Our men were in grave danger of losing both their lives and Mexico if they did not stop the war and riot, because Cacama was a fierce warrior with many good soldiers. Besides, there were still some in Mexico who wished to start a revolt in order to free Moteuczoma and kill or throw out the Spaniards.

Moteuczoma resolved the situation well, since he knew better than to count on war or force and recognized that, in the end, everything (f. 73v) would depend on him. He arranged for some captains who were in Tetzcoco to arrest Cacama and hand him over. Either because Moteuczoma was their king and still alive or because they had always served him, or because of his gifts and promises, they took Cacama captive one day while he met with them and others in a war council. They put him in the acalles they had ready and brought him to Mexico without incurring deaths or scandals, although his capture took place in his own house and palace near the lake. Before he was turned over to Moteuczoma, he was carried in a handsome litter, as was the custom of the kings of Tetzcoco, who were the primary leading lords in all this land after those of Mexico.

Moteuczoma refused to see him; instead, he handed him over to Cortés, who put him in leg irons and handcuffs under heavy guard. Following Moteuczoma's advice and wishes, Cortés installed Cacama's younger

brother Cucuzca,[257] **who also had another name**, as lord of Tetzcoco and Acolhuacan. Cucuzca had fled from his brother Cacamatzin and was then in Mexico with his uncle. Moteuczoma invested him with his [brother's] title and presided over the ceremonies conducted for new lords, as we will mention elsewhere. Following Cortés's orders, [Cucuzca] was obeyed in Tetzcoco, for he was loved more than the mean and stubborn Cacama. In this way, danger was averted, although I do not know what would have happened had there been more Cacamas. Cortés made kings and commanded with as much authority as if he had already conquered the Mexica empire. In truth, he held this authority from the time he entered the land and decided to conquer Mexico and rule the state of **the great** Moteuczoma, **and all the land, as his efforts later proved.**

[Chapter 93]. Moteuczoma's Oration to His Noblemen, Offering Himself to the King of Castile

After imprisoning Cacamatzin, Moteuczoma and Cortés summoned all the lords of the provinces outside Mexico. They came either of their own accord or to obey Cortés. In the Spaniards' presence, Moteuczoma gave the following oration **to his vassals and governors:**

My Relatives, Friends, and Servants,

You well know that for eighteen years I have been your king, as were my fathers and grandfathers, and that I have always been a good lord, and you have been my good and obedient vassals, as I am confident you will be now and for all the years of my life. You will remember that you learned from our fathers or heard from our wise priests and prophets that we are neither native to this land nor is our kingdom a permanent one. Our ancestors came from distant lands, and the king or leader they brought with them returned to his origin, saying he would send someone to rule and command if he did not return to them. Be assured that the king whom we have awaited for so many years is the one now sent by the Spaniards you see here, as they say they are our relatives and have known about us for many years. Let us thank the gods that those we longed for have come during our time. You will please me

257. Or Cocozca. LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 184, has Cuicuitzcatzin. Don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *Obras históricas*, 2 vols., ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (México, 1977), 2:241, has a Cuicuitzcatzin (also called Tocpacxochitzin) as one of four of Nezahualpilli's sons, or *infantes*, who was sent from Tlaxcala by Cortés to negotiate with Coanacochtzin (not Cacamatzin). This is, of course, after Noche Triste. He states that his brother Coanacochtzin succeeded Cacamatzin, 1:549.

greatly by giving yourselves to this captain as vassals of our lord, the emperor and king of Spain, as I have already given myself to him as his friend (f. 74) and servant. I implore you to obey him well from now on, as you have obeyed me up to now, and that you give and pay him the tribute, taxes, and service that are normally my due, for with this you could not please me more. **From this moment on I wish to abdicate my lordship.**

He could no longer speak to them due to the tears and sobs of all the people, who were unable to respond for quite a while. They gave so many sighs and lamented so greatly that even our men's hearts were touched. In the end, they answered that they would do as he commanded. First Moteuczoma, and then all the others, gave themselves as vassals to the king of Castile, promising their loyalty, which was recorded by an escribano and before witnesses. Then each went to his house, feeling in his heart what only God knows and you may only imagine. It was a sight to see Moteuczoma and so many lords and nobles cry so hard and wish to die because of this. However, they had no option but to do it, both because of Moteuczoma's command and will and because of the prophecies and signs publicized by the priests of the coming of the bearded white foreigners from the east, **from the land where the sun rises,** to rule that land. They commented that **King** Moteuczoma's death spelled not only the end of the Colhua lineage, but the lordship **and monarchy of the Mexica,** and therefore some said it should not be he nor should he have been called Moteuczoma, which means "Angered by His Misfortune." They added that Moteuczoma had heard many times from the oracles of his gods that, since the line of the Mexica emperors ended with him, no son of his would inherit the kingdom and he would lose his throne in the eighth year of his reign. For these reasons, they say he never wished to go to war against the Spaniards, believing they would succeed him, although he nevertheless thought this a falsehood for he had already been king for more than seventeen years.

Whether for this reason or by the will of God, who gives and takes away kingdoms **and monarchies, giving them to those who deserve them,** Moteuczoma greatly loved Cortés and the Spaniards and would not anger them. Cortés thanked Moteuczoma as politely as he could on his and the emperor's behalf. He consoled him, for he was saddened by the speech. Cortés promised he would always be king and lord as he now was and an even better one, not only in his kingdoms but in all those Cortés conquered and won over to the service of the emperor, **our king and lord. With this, the king and the captain and his companions said goodbye and went to their houses.**

[Chapter 94]. The Gold and Jewels Moteuczoma Gave Cortés

Several days after Moteuczoma and his people rendered obeisance, Cortés told him of the many expenses the emperor incurred in war and public works, and that it would be a great help for them all to contribute and begin to serve in some way. Therefore, it would be fitting to collect the tribute in gold and see what the new vassals did and gave, and [Moteuczoma] could also give something, if possible. Moteuczoma responded that he would be pleased to do so and to send some Spaniards with his servants to the House of Birds, **where his treasure and riches were stored.** Many went there and upon opening a hall and two chambers, the Spaniards were astonished (f. 74v) to see so much gold in sheets, disks, jewels, and finished pieces. Not wishing or daring to touch it without Cortés seeing it first, they summoned him, and he went, and **with the king's** consent took it and carried it to his room. In addition, Moteuczoma furnished many fine garments of cotton and wondrously woven feathers in colors and figures of unparalleled beauty never before seen by the Spaniards. He also gave twelve blowguns of wood and silver with which he hunted, some painted and decorated with birds, animals, roses, flowers, and trees, everything so perfect and detailed for the eyes to behold and appreciate the artistry. Other blowguns were cast, engraved with more care and subtlety than paintings. The nets for clay and turquoise pellets were of gold and silver.

[Moteuczoma] sent servants in pairs and in groups of five with a Spaniard accompanying them to his provinces and other lords' lands at eighty and one hundred leagues outside Mexico to collect gold for the emperor in exchange for their usual tribute or as a new service obligation. Each province and lord gave the measure and quantity stipulated and requested by Moteuczoma: gold leaf, small silver bars, jewels, stones, and pearls. After many days, the messengers returned, and Cortés [and the treasurers] collected the **treasures** they brought and melted them, from which were extracted 60,000 pesos of pure gold and over 500 marcos of silver. This was distributed to each Spaniard, not equally but according to his **merit**: the horseman received twice that of the foot soldier, with more given to the officers and persons of rank. From what remained, Cortés was paid what he had been promised at Veracruz. The king's fifth amounted to more than 32,000 gold pesos and 100 silver marcos; from this silver were fabricated plates, cups, jars, salt cellars, and other pieces in the manner of the Indians to send to the emperor. He also set aside to send with the royal fifth 100,000 ducats' worth of pearls, stones, clothing, gold, feathers, silver, and many jewels that, like the blowguns, were as extraordinary and beautiful as they

were valuable, for they depicted lifelike fish, birds, serpents, animals, trees, and other things in gold or silver or stones with feathers of unmatched beauty. But the treasure was never sent, since it was lost along with everyone else's during the chaos in Mexico, **so spoiled and vain did our men act with their riches,** as we will relate the episode in its entirety below.

[Chapter 95]. How Moteuczoma Begged Cortés to Leave Mexico

When Cortés saw that he was wealthy and powerful, he had three thoughts: one was to send monies and news of his prosperity in Mexico to Santo Domingo and the other islands in order to attract people, arms, and horses, as his men were too few for such a large kingdom. Another was to take over all of Moteuczoma's lands, since he was imprisoned and Coatlicamatl and Tuchintletzin as well as the Tlaxcalteca were on his side. He knew that the peoples of Pánuco, Tehuantepec, and Michoacan were great enemies of the Mexica and would help (f. 75) him if needed. The third was to Christianize all the Indians. This he did as soon as possible as his major and most important act. Even though he had not destroyed the idols for the reasons already stated, he forbade human sacrifice. Instead, he placed crosses, images of our Lady and other saints in the temples and had the priests and friars say daily mass and administer baptism. Few Indians were baptized, however, either because they held hard to their old religion or because our men attended to other things, waiting for the right time. Cortés heard mass every day and ordered the Spaniards to do likewise, since it was always celebrated in **his** house.

Yet Cortés set aside these considerations for three reasons: because Moteuczoma changed his mind or at least tried to do so; because Pánfilo de Narváez attacked him; and because after the attack the Indians expelled him from Mexico. All three events are significant, and we will explain them in the order in which they occurred. According to some, Moteuczoma's change of heart, as some say, was to tell Cortés to return to his land if he did not wish to be killed along with the rest of the Spaniards. Moteuczoma had three motives, two of which were known; one was the continuous battle his men waged for him to leave his prison and expel or kill the Spaniards, saying that it was a great affront and disgrace for him and his men to remain imprisoned and defeated. Instead, he should give orders to capture the few foreigners who were dishonoring them, stealing their possessions, and taking all the gold and treasure of the towns and lords for themselves and their

king, who was apparently very poor. If he wanted to do this, well and good; if he did not, they did not wish to be his vassals since he did not wish to be their lord. Thus, he should expect no better fate than that of Qualpopoca and Cacama, his nephew, no matter how many flattering words he received.

His second motive was that whenever the devil appeared to him, he incited Moteuczoma many times to kill or expel the Spaniards, saying that if he did not, he would leave and never again speak to him, so tormented and angered was he by the masses, Gospel, crosses, and Christian baptisms. Moteuczoma told the devil that it was not good to kill the Spaniards, for they were his friends and honest men, but he would ask them to leave, and if they refused, he would then kill them. To this, the devil replied that he should go ahead and do so, as this would please him greatly. Either he would leave or the Spaniards, for they spread the Christian religion, one so contrary to theirs that they cannot coexist.

His third motive, not made public but suspected by many, was that, since men are inconstant and never stay true to their intentions, Moteuczoma regretted what he had done. He now lamented Cacamatzin's imprisonment, which he had so desired before. He thought Cacamatzin should succeed him instead of his sons, acknowledging as true what his men said. Also, the devil had told him that he could make no greater or more acceptable service or sacrifice to the gods than to kill or drive the Cristians from the land, so that the lineage of the Colhua kings (f. 75v) would not die with him; rather, he would rejoice and his sons would reign after him. He should therefore not believe in omens, for his eighth year as king had already passed and he was nearing his eighteenth. Due to these motives or perhaps to others we do not know, Moteuczoma secretly prepared one hundred thousand men without Cortés's knowledge to capture and kill the Spaniards if they did not leave [LdeG: when told]. With this, he determined to speak with Cortés.

Chapter 96. How King Moteuczoma Sent for Captain Cortés to Drive Him from the Land

[LdeG: One day] Moteuczoma met with many of his nobles surreptitiously in the courtyard to report to them and sent for Cortés, who stated, "I am not pleased with this news; may it be for a good reason, God willing." He took with him twelve soldiers who were close by to see what Moteuczoma wanted and why he summoned him, for he rarely did

so. Moteuczoma stood up, took him by the hand, and, leading him into a room where he ordered seats for them both, stated:

I beseech you to depart from this my city and land, since my gods are very angry with me for having you here. Ask me for whatever you wish, and I shall give it, as I love you very much and do not think I say this to deceive you but in truth. Therefore, see to it that everything I say is carried out.

Cortés realized what was happening, for it seemed to him that he had not been received in the usual manner, although he was treated as politely and ceremoniously as on other occasions. Before the interpreter finished translating Moteuczoma's mandate, Cortés told one of the twelve Spaniards to go notify his companions to get ready to save their lives. Our men then remembered what had been told them at Tlaxcala, and all saw that they would require God's grace and a strong heart to overcome their predicament.

When **Malintzin and** the interpreter had finished, Cortés replied, "I understand what you have said and I thank you very much; let us know when you wish us to leave, and we will do so." Moteuczoma answered, "I do not want you to leave until you wish, and take the time you believe will be necessary. I will then give you two cargas of gold and one for each of your men." Cortés responded:

My lord, you know how my ships were destroyed when we arrived in your land. We now have need of others to take us back to ours. Therefore, I would like you to summon your carpenters to cut down and work timber, since I have men who can build ships, and, once built, we will depart if you give us what you have promised. Inform your gods and vassals of this.

Showing great contentment, Moteuczoma replied, "So it shall be," and summoned many carpenters. Cortés provided these experts to the Spanish sailors, who went to some pine forests **near the coast of Veracruz**. They felled many large trees and began to work the timber. Moteuczoma, who apparently was not a devious person, believed them. But Cortés said to the Spaniards he was sending:

Moteuczoma wants us to leave here because his vassals and the devil have put the idea in his head. It is therefore fitting that we build ships. By **our** faith, go with the Indians (f. 76) and cut the timber; meanwhile, God our Lord **(**on whose business we are**)** will provide us with people, aid, and protection so we do not lose this good land. It is advisable that you delay as much as possible, pretending to do something so **the Indians** do not suspect we are deceiving them; and we may carry out our plans here. Go with God and let me know always how you are doing there and what they do or say; **or if there is a mutiny so it can be stopped.**

[Chapter 97]. Cortés and His Men Fear Being Sacrificed

Eight days after the men left for the timber, fifteen ships[258] arrived on the coast at Chalchicueyecan. The administrators and watchmen there informed Moteuczoma, sending messengers who traveled eighty leagues in four days. Fearing that Cortés would find out, Moteuczoma summoned him; Cortés feared no less, distrusting always the town's fury and the king's fancy. When Cortés learned that Moteuczoma was entering the courtyard, he thought that if he was about to attack the Spaniards, all would be lost. He said to them:

Lords and Friends,

Given the events of the other day, Moteuczoma's summons is not a good sign. I will go to see what he wants; remain alert and at the ready[259] in case the Indians attempt something. Entrust yourselves to God; remember who you are and who they are: infidels hated by God, friends of the devil with few weapons and these ill used in war. If we were to fight them, our hands would demonstrate by deed and through the sword the valor of our efforts. Thus, even though we may die, we remain the victors for we will have fulfilled our purpose and our service to God as Christians and to our king as Spaniards in honor of our Spain and in defense of our lives.

They answered, "This will be our duty unto death, with no fear or danger to impede it, since we value our honor more than life."

With this, Cortés went to Moteuczoma, who told him, "Lord Captain, know that you now have ships in which you can depart whenever you wish." Cortés answered him, "Powerful Lord, I will leave as soon as they are built." "Eleven ships **(**said Moteuczoma**)** have landed at the shore near Cempoala. I will soon know if the passengers have disembarked, and we will then know who they are and how many." "May Jesus Christ be blessed" **(**said Cortés**).** "I give many thanks to God for the favors he bestows on me and the hidalgos in my company." A Spaniard rushed to tell his companions, and, taking heart, they all praised God and embraced one another, very happy with the news. A foot messenger came to Cortés and Moteuczoma to tell them that there had landed eighty horsemen and eight hundred infantrymen with two pieces of artillery, showing them a painting that depicted the men, horses, artillery, and ships.

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258. Thomas, *Conquest*, 358, states that Narváez had eleven *naos* and seven brigantines, although one ship was lost and six were damaged by the time he reached San Juan de Ulúa. Cortés, *Letters*, 113, states that there were eighteen ships.

259. "Being at the ready" is the equivalent of the Spanish idiom, *con la barba en la cebadera*, meaning literally "with one's beard in the feed bag."

Moteuczoma then stood up, embraced Cortés, and said, "I now love you more than ever, and I wish to dine with you." Cortés thanked him for this and for the other [news]; and they walked hand in hand (f. 76v) to his chamber. Cortés told the Spaniards not to exhibit any concern, but to remain together and alert and to thank the Lord for this news.

Cortés and Moteuczoma dined together, to everyone's great rejoicing. While some thought [the Spaniards] would stay and subjugate the kingdom and its people, others believed that those they could not stand to see in their land would soon leave. Moteuczoma was saddened, although it is said he did not show it. Noticing this, one of his captains, **a great corsair,** recommended that he kill Cortés's companions, for they were few. Thus, there would be fewer to kill of those who had landed, and it would keep the two groups from uniting, since the one would not dare to come if the other were dead. On hearing this, Moteuczoma summoned many lords and captains to a council, proposing the case and the captain's recommendation. Although the votes were mixed, in the end it was decided to permit the Spaniards to come, thinking the more, the better. They could kill more and all of them together, reasoning that if they killed those in the city, the others would return to the ships, and they could not sacrifice them as their gods desired. Determined to carry this out, Moteuczoma visited Cortés each day with five hundred noblemen and lords and giving orders that the Spaniards be served and entertained more lavishly than before, since they did not have long to live **on earth.**

[Chapter 98]. How Diego Velázquez Sent Pánfilo de Narváez with Many People to Attack Cortés

Diego Velázquez was very angry with Cortés, not so much because of the cost, as he had spent little or nothing, but because of his honor and interest in recent events. As Lieutenant Governor of Cuba, he had brought serious complaints against Cortés for not including or informing him of all he had done and discovered. Cortés had instead communicated directly with the king in Spain, as if this were wrong or treasonous. Velázquez first became angry when he learned that Cortés had sent the royal fifth and gift—**the first fifth to arrive from his principales—**and the accounts of what he had discovered and done to the king and his council by ship with Francisco de Montejo and Alonso Hernández de Portocarrero. He armed one or two caravels, which he dispatched to overtake Cortés's ship and its cargo. In one, he sent Gonzalo de Guzmán,[260] who became

260. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 345–46, states that Guzmán was a loyal supporter of Velázquez and enjoyed a profitable existence in Cuba. He served as governor 1526–1531.

lieutenant governor of Cuba upon Velázquez's death. But since they delayed in setting sail, they did not capture it.

The more news Velázquez received about Cortés's feats and prosperity, the more his ill will and hatred increased and the more he schemed to ruin and destroy him. While he harbored these thoughts, his chaplain Benito Martín arrived at Santiago de Cuba, bringing letters from the emperor with the title of adelantado and a *cédula*, "royal decree," granting him the **garrison** [*sic*][261] of all the land and coast of Yucatan that had been discovered, settled, and conquered. This made [Velázquez] very happy, both because he could drive Cortés from Mexico and also because the king had bestowed titles and favors on him. He assembled a fleet of eleven ships and seven brigantines, with nine hundred (f. 77) Spaniards and eighty horses. He named Pánfilo de Narváez as his captain general and lieutenant governor [of Yucatan]. So the fleet would be ready sooner and embark more quickly, he himself crossed the island to Guaniguanico, which is on its westernmost tip.

Velázquez readied his return to Santiago and Narváez his departure for Mexico. But Licenciado Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón,[262] oidor of Santo Domingo, came on behalf of the chancellery and Hieronymite friars who governed there, and on behalf of Licenciado Rodrigo de Figueroa,[263] *juez de residencia*, "presiding judge at a court or trial held at the end of a term of office," and *visitador*, "inspector," of the Audiencia, to command, under grave penalty, that Velázquez not send Narváez and Narváez not attack Cortés. These actions would bring death, civil war, and many other evils on the Spaniards, and Mexico would be lost, along with all that had been gained peacefully for the king. Ayllón told them that if they were angry with Cortés and disagreed over property or honor, it was the emperor who should hear and adjudicate the case. They should not play judge in their own proceedings, as this was unfair to their opponents. He beseeched them that, if they wished to first serve God and the king and win honors and benefits, to go and conquer new lands, as many had been discovered besides that of Cortés, and for this they had good men and a good fleet.

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261. C. has *guarnición*, "garrison," instead of *gobernación*, "governance."

262. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 248–50, notes that Vázquez de Ayllón was a high-ranking official in Santo Domingo and a very successful entrepreneur. He was also very upset that Velázquez and Narváez so boldly ignored his instructions. Upon arriving in Veracruz, he was arrested and forced to return on a long, arduous voyage to Santo Domingo.

263. Figueroa became governor of Hispaniola upon the departure of the Hieronymite friars-governors in 1520 and served briefly until the arrival of don Diego Colón. He subsequently served as judge, until 1525 when he was forced to relinquish the office because of numerous charges of abuse that had been brought against him. Ibid., 336–38.

Neither the prohibition nor the authority and person of Ayllón was sufficient to keep Diego Velázquez and Narváez from proceeding with their voyage against Cortés. Seeing their obstinacy and little regard for justice, Ayllón decided to accompany Narváez on his ship from Santo Domingo to attempt to stop him from causing harm. He thought he would stand a better chance with him alone, rather than with Velázquez present; also, he could arbitrate between Cortés and Narváez if they clashed. Despite Ayllón, Narváez embarked at Guaniguanico, sailing with his fleet toward Veracruz. When he learned that one hundred and fifty of Cortés's Spaniards were there, he sent a priest, along with Juan Ruiz de Guevara[264] and Alonso de Vergara,[265] to order that they accept him as their captain and governor. But those in Veracruz refused to obey; instead, they arrested and sent the three men to Mexico for Cortés to interrogate. Narváez then unloaded the people, horses, weapons, and artillery, and went to Cempoala. Thinking he had come on behalf of Cortés, the neighboring Indians, Cortés's allies as well as Moteuczoma's vassals, gave him gold, mantas, and food.

[Chapter 99]. What Cortés Wrote to Narváez

More than anyone imagined, this great new fleet gave Cortés much concern until he knew to whom it belonged. On the one hand, he was pleased that Spaniards had come; but on the other, he was worried about their number. If they came to assist him, he had won the land; if they came to attack him, it was lost. Thinking that so many people could not come from Spain, he suspected they were from the islands, and that Diego Velázquez (f. 77v) had come with them.[266] Once he knew, he again became sorrowful **and very much concerned**, for this broke his lucky streak and hindered his progress in learning the land's secrets: its mines and treasures, its strengths, and who Moteuczoma's friends and enemies were. It kept him from the places he had begun to settle, from winning friends, and, what was most important, from Christianizing the Indians. It halted many things related to the service of God and the king and the benefit of our nation.

He knew that if he tried to avoid one obstacle, many more might fol-

264. Ibid., 233, states that Ruiz de Guevara was a friar who was immediately arrested by Sandoval upon his arrival at Veracruz. He was subsequently hurriedly transported in a hammock by natives to Mexico.

265. Ibid., 253, adds that little is known about Vergara, other than that he was one of only a few conquerors who returned to live in Spain.

266. Velázquez had remained in Cuba.

low. If he allowed Narváez, the captain of Velázquez's fleet, into Mexico, he could count on his own undoing; if he fought against him, he could count on the city's rebellion and Moteuczoma's freedom. In both cases, he placed his life, honor, and labor in jeopardy. And so as not to arrive at either extreme, he chose the middle ground. The first action he took was to dispatch two men; one to Juan Velázquez de León, who had gone to settle Coatzacoalco, so that when he received Cortés's letter he would return to Mexico. He notified him of Narváez's coming and the need he had of him and the one hundred and fifty Spaniards in his company. He sent the other man to Veracruz to learn the complete and exact details of Narváez's arrival and what he wanted and said. Juan Velázquez did what Cortés asked and not what Narváez wrote, which was that, as his brother-in-law and Diego Velázquez's relative, he should join his side. For this and from then on, Cortés honored him greatly.

Twenty Spaniards left Veracruz for Mexico bringing news of what Narváez was saying and taking as prisoners the priest, Guevara, and Vergara, who had gone there to incite Cortés's men against him under the pretense that they would take command by royal cédula. Cortés's second action was to send the Mercedarian friar Bartolomé de Olmedo[267] with two other Spaniards to offer his friendship to Narváez. If he did not accept it, Olmedo was to order him on the king's behalf and in Cortés's name as justicia mayor of that land and on behalf of the alcaldes and regidores of Veracruz, who were in Mexico, to enter quietly if he brought decrees from the king or the council. Narváez should not do any damage in the land, scandalize, cause harm, or hamper the Spaniards' good fortune, the emperor's service, or the Indians' conversion. If he did not bring **or present** any decrees, he should return to Cuba and leave the land and its people in peace.

But Cortés's order, his letters, and his governance did little good. Cortés released the priest brought as prisoner by the men from Veracruz and sent him, after the Mercedarian, to Narváez with some very expensive gold necklaces and other jewels. He also sent a letter summarizing how pleased he was that he, and no other, had come with the fleet, since they had known one another for a long time. They should meet alone if possible (f. 78) to jointly order that no war or death or anger occur between Spaniards and their brothers, because if he brought decrees from the king and showed them to him and the Veracruz cabildo, they would be obeyed, as was just; if not, they would reach another acceptable accord.

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267. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 101–2, notes that fray Bartolomé was not only Cortés's chaplain, but he also played a major role as spiritual adviser during the entire expedition and conquest. It is said that he also furnished Moteuczoma with spiritual instruction.

Because Narváez came with such force and Velázquez, who sent him, was so angry and indignant, he paid little or no attention to Cortés's letters, offers, and orders.

[Chapter 100]. What Pánfilo de Narváez Told [LdeG: the Indians and] Cortés

Pánfilo de Narváez told the Indians they had been deceived, for it was he who was captain and lord, not Cortés, who was an evil man, as were the servants who were with him in Mexico. He had come to cut off Cortés's head, punish and drive the Spaniards from the land, and then depart, leaving it free. Seeing so many bearded men and horses, they believed him, I think, because they were so inconstant and cowardly. On this basis, they served and accompanied him, abandoning Cortés's men in Veracruz. [Narváez] also won over Moteuczoma, telling him that Cortés was there against the king's wishes, that he was greedy and a thief, and that he stole [Moteuczoma's] land and wanted to kill him to take over the kingdom. Narváez would free him and restore everything that those evil men had taken from him; to keep them from doing the same harm and damage to others, he would arrest and imprison or kill them. Moteuczoma should therefore be happy, for they would soon meet, and Narváez would do nothing more than restore him to his kingdom and return to his land.

These dealings were so evil, and the words Narváez directed publicly against Cortés and the Spaniards in his company so ugly and ferocious that they seemed very wicked to his army, and many could not hear these words without condemning them, especially Bernardino de Santa Clara,[268] **an honest knight**, who reprehended him harshly on seeing the land so peaceful and content with Cortés. Ayllón also ordered [Narváez] many times, under penalty of death and loss of property, to refrain from such pronouncements and from going to Mexico, since this would be a great scandal to the Indians, a disturbance to the Spaniards, a disservice to the emperor, and a hindrance to baptizing.

Angered by the order issued by Ayllón, the king's oidor, Narváez arrested him, along with a secretary from the Audiencia and an alguacil, sending them by ship to Velázquez. Yet, either by bribing the sailors or threatening them with the king's justice, Ayllón contrived to return freely to the chancellery, where he told his companions and governors what

268. Ibid., 237–38, adds that Santa Clara had apparently come to New Spain with Narváez but took Cortés's side after arriving at Veracruz. He served on various conquest expeditions and enjoyed the spoils of a profitable encomienda.

had **happened to him and had** occurred with Narváez, which did no little harm to Diego Velázquez's affairs and improved those of Cortés. In the same way he had arrested Ayllón, Narváez proclaimed war by fire and blood **(**as they say**)** against Cortés. (f. 78v) He promised some gold marcos to whomever would capture or kill Cortés, Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval, or other principal men in his company. Finally, he distributed monies and clothes to his men, giving what did not belong to him as favors. These three actions were trivial and boastful.

Many of Narváez's Spaniards rebelled because of Ayllón's orders, or because they had heard of Cortés's wealth and munificence. Pedro de Villalobos,[269] a Portuguese, and another six or seven men went over to Cortés's side, and others wrote him, according to some, offering themselves if he would come for them. Without revealing names and signatures, Cortés read his men the letters, which reported that Narváez had called them traitors and threatened to kill them and take away their property and land. Some say Narváez's men rebelled; others that Cortés had bribed them with letters, offers, and a carga of gold necklaces and bars that he sent secretly to Narváez's camp with one of his servants, and by spreading the word that he had two hundred Spaniards in Cempoala. All this could be true, as the one man was lukewarm and careless and the other careful and passionate in his affairs.

Narváez replied to Cortés in a letter brought by the Mercedarian friar [Olmedo], stating that as soon as he read it he should come to where Narváez was, since he wanted to show him the decrees from the emperor that he had brought to take **possession of** the land on behalf of Diego Velázquez. Moreover, he had already founded a villa of men with only alcaldes and regidores. Upon receiving the letter, Cortés sent Bernardino de Quesada[270] and Alonso de Mata[271] with orders for Narváez to leave the land under penalty of death. Although the two men were supposed to notify Cortés of the decrees [in Narváez's possession], they did not, either because they did not bring them, since it was foolish to entrust them to anyone, or because they were not given the opportunity. Rather, Cortés had Pedro de Mata[272] arrested for calling himself a royal

269. Ibid., 255, reports that Villalobos was of invaluable service to Cortés. He was, it seems, among the boldest and bravest in the company.

270. Ibid., 228. Apparently it was Bernardino Quesada y Mata, an escribano, who, acting on Velázquez's order, served Cortés with orders in Mexico Tenochtitlan to leave New Spain.

271. Ibid, 210. Possibly a relative of Quesada, de Mata was another escribano sent by Narváez with orders to force Cortés to depart. He later participated in the conquest of Mexico Tenochtitlan and was cited for his prowess in battle.

272. We have not been able to identify a Pedro de Mata. It is likely that LdeG intended Alonso, in keeping with the context.

escribano when he was not, or for not presenting his title. **He was later punished by law.**

[Chapter 101]. What Cortés Told His Men

When Cortés saw that the letters and messengers that he and Narváez exchanged daily had no effect, and since the royal decrees had never been produced or seen, Cortés decided to meet him beard to beard, as they say, since meeting face to face is more honorable than using intermediaries. Cortés thus dispatched the *veedor*, "inspector," Rodrigo Álvarez the younger,[273] Juan Velázquez, and Juan del Río[274] to conduct the negotiations as best they could. Among the many issues to be discussed with Narváez, three were most pressing: [First,] Cortés would either meet him alone or each would be accompanied by the same number of men. [Second,] Narváez should leave Cortés in Mexico and go conquer the Pánuco region, which remained peaceful under some leading noblemen, or other kingdoms, with Cortés paying his expenses and assisting his men. Otherwise, Narváez was to remain in Mexico, giving Cortés four hundred Spaniards from the fleet so that with them and his own men Cortés could go conquer other lands. (f. 79) [Third,] Narváez should present the royal decrees he carried, which Cortés would obey.

The only proposition Narváez agreed to was that each man, accompanied by ten hidalgos, would meet under oath at a safe place. Both men signed the pledge, but the meeting did not come to pass, because Rodrigo Álvarez the younger told Cortés of a plot hatched by Narváez to seize or kill him on sight. Familiar with treachery, Álvarez recognized deceit and guile in the negotiations, or perhaps he was warned by someone who wished Cortés no evil.

When the negotiations stalled, Cortés decided to attack Narváez, thinking something would come of it. Before his departure, he spoke with the Spaniards and reminded them of how much he had done for them, and they for him, since the beginning of their undertaking. He told them that, rather than thank them for all they had done to serve God and the emperor, Velázquez had sent the rough, **ill-tempered,** and hardheaded Narváez to destroy and murder them because they, as good vassals, had resorted to the king rather than to Velázquez, to whom they had no obligation. Narváez had already confiscated their goods and

273. Ibid., 15, notes that Álvarez was imprisoned by Narváez. He later served as veedor for several years in New Spain.

274. Ibid., 337. Apparently little is known of Del Río other than that he eventually returned to Spain.

given them to others. He condemned their bodies to the gallows and put their reputations at stake with his many insults and jeers. His acts were unworthy of a Christian, but Cortés's men were good Christians who would not feign ignorance or leave such affronts without punishment. Although revenge should be left to God alone, who repays the proud and the envious as He sees fit, Cortés believed that his men should at least keep Narvaéz, who came prepared to suck the blood of their neighbors, from enjoying the fruits of their own labor and efforts. Narváez's men were **shamelessly** inciting their Indian friends against them, plotting wars worse than the civil conflicts of Marius and Sulla, or the wars of Julius Caesar and Pompey **in** [LdeG: which brought down] the Roman Empire. He resolved to intercept Narváez and not allow him to reach Mexico, because the best defense is a good offense.[275] God helps those who help themselves,[276] and misfortune is defeated by courage, like that of Cortés's men, which had been tested when following him into war. Moreover, many of Narváez's men would come over to his side.

Thus, Cortés told them his intentions, so that those who wished to accompany him should get ready and those who did not were welcome to stay and guard Mexico and Moteuczoma, both of equal value. He also made many promises to them if he returned victorious. The Spaniards answered that they would do whatever he ordered, for his speech had infuriated them. They truly feared both Narváez's arrogance and blindness and the Indians, who were encouraged by the dissension among the Spaniards, and because the natives on the coast had joined forces with Narváez. **These matters** (f. 79v) **troubled the good Cortés, although he showed greater resolve than Caesar.**

[Chapter 102]. Cortés Pleads with Moteuczoma

Since Cortés thought his men to be his friends and well disposed after hearing what he said, he spoke with Moteuczoma to learn what was in his heart so that he could act with greater [LdeG: certainty], giving the following reasons:

My Lord,

You are aware of the love I have for you, of my desire to serve you, and of the hope I have that you will grant many gifts to [LdeG: me and] my companions upon our departure. Now I beseech you to favor me by remaining here always and by protecting the Spaniards I leave

275. Spanish proverb: *Mejor Dios os salve que no quién está allá.*
276. *Valía más a quien Dios ayuda, que no quien mucho madruga.*

in your company, whom I entrust to your care, along with the gold and jewels you gave us, which they still have, so that I may leave to tell those newly arrived in the fleet how Your Highness has commanded me to depart. I will tell them not to hurt or anger your subjects and vassals or enter your lands. They should remain on the coast until we are ready to embark and take our leave in accordance with your will and favor. Should an insolent, stubborn, or rash subject of yours wish to anger my men, who are now under your protection, you will order them to remain calm **and not to riot. I in turn direct my men not to distress yours under pain of punishment.**

Moteuczoma promised to do as he said, telling Cortés to notify him if his subjects misbehaved or did not do his bidding, so he could send soldiers to punish and expel them from his lands. If he wished, Moteuczoma would provide him with guides to lead them always through his lands to the sea; they would also serve him and secure provisions along the way. Cortés kissed his hands, thanking him profusely, and gave Spanish clothing and some jewels to one of Moteuczoma's sons and many barter goods to other lords who were present. However, Cortés did not find out his intentions, either because Moteuczoma had not heard from Narváez or because he dissembled artfully, gladdened by the thought that the Christians would kill one another and believing he would gain his freedom and his gods would be placated.

[Chapter 103]. The Imprisonment of Pánfilo de Narváez

Cortés was so beloved by his Spaniards that all wished to accompany him, and therefore he could select the men he wanted, who numbered two hundred and fifty, which included those he seized along the way from Juan Velázquez de León. The remaining two hundred or so men were to guard Moteuczoma and the city. He designated Pedro de Alvarado **and Juan de Cabra**[277] as captains, placing in their hands the artillery and the four boats they had built to secure the lake. He begged them to be certain that Moteuczoma did not leave their camp and stronghold to join Narváez.

Cortés departed with those few Spaniards, the eight or nine horses (f. 80) he had, and many Indian servants. He was received and lodged well as he passed through **the republic of** Cholola and **visited the four lords of** Tlaxcala. About fifteen leagues before reaching Cempoala,

277. Ibid., 150, states that Cabra is noted especially for his role in the siege of Mexico Tenochtitlan.

where Narváez was, he came across two priests and his acquaintance and friend Andrés de Duero, to whom he owed money loaned to him to finish preparing the fleet. They had come to tell him he must obey General and Lieutanant Governor Narváez and surrender to him both the land and its forces, for if not Narváez would proceed against him as a rebel and enemy until he brought about his death. If he complied, Narváez would give him his ships so he could leave freely and safely with whomever he chose. Cortés responded that, barring a direct order from the emperor, he would rather die than leave Narváez the land he had secured with his own hands and effort. If Narváez wished to insult him by waging war, he knew how to defend himself. If Cortés won, as with God's help he hoped, he would not be in need of Narváez's ships, and if he died he would need them even less. Therefore, Narváez should present the royal decrees and instructions he **had and** carried with him, as Cortés would not agree to anything without first seeing them. Since Narváez had not produced them, it was a sign that he neither had nor carried them. This being the case, Cortés entreated, enjoined, and commanded Narváez to return safely to Cuba. Otherwise, he would arrest him and send him in chains to Spain for the emperor to duly punish his disservice and rebellion.

Cortés sent Duero on his way, along with a notary and others bearing his power of attorney and an order to command Narváez to set sail so as not to incite the men and the land to mutiny, thus preventing any further deaths or damage. If Narváez did not leave by the feast day of the Holy Spirit, which was only three days away, Cortés would march against him. Narváez mocked the order, arrested the man carrying the power of attorney, and ridiculed Cortés for daring to threaten them with so few men. He paraded his men in front of Juan Velázquez de León, Juan del Río, and the other men from Cortés's company, who participated in the negotiations and accords. He brought out eighty *escopeteros*, "musketeers," one hundred and twenty crossbowmen, six hundred infantrymen, and eighty horsemen, saying, "How will you defend yourselves against us if you do not comply with our wishes?" Narváez promised money to whomever brought him Cortés dead or in chains, and Cortés did the same. To intimidate the Indians, Narváez had the infantry encircle them, the horsemen engage in mock combat, and the artillery fired. Moved by fear, a governor of a nearby region pledged obedience to Narváez, presenting him with mantas and gold jewels in the name of his great lord Moteuczoma.

They say Narváez had the Indians take another message with a painted depiction of his army on parade to Moteuczoma and the Mexica noblemen. He hurried across the countryside because he was told Cortés

was getting close. On Easter Sunday, he marched all of his eighty horses and five hundred foot soldiers to within a league from where Cortés drew near. (f. 80v) When he did not find Cortés, he thought that the interpreters who served him as spies had deceived him; he then returned to camp at nightfall and went to sleep. To protect against the arrival of his enemy, Narváez posted Gonzalo de Carrasco[278] and Alonso Hurtado[279] as sentries on the road, almost a league from Cempoala. On that same Easter [Sunday], Cortés advanced more than ten leagues, to the great fatigue of his men. Shortly before Cortés arrived, he gave a written order and an escort of eighty Spaniards strong to the alguacil mayor Gonzalo de Sandoval so that he would either arrest or kill Narváez and his alcaldes and regidores if he resisted.

Cortés's advance guard, which always traveled a good distance ahead, came upon Narváez's spies and seized Gonzalo de Carrasco, who revealed the positions of Narváez's quarters, men, and artillery. Eluding them, Hurtado ran into Narváez's courtyard screaming, "To your weapons! To your weapons! Cortés is coming!" Those who slept were awakened by the call, but many did not believe it. Leaving the horses behind in the forest, Cortés improvised some spears for each of his men. His advance guard entered the enemy town and camp at midnight so as to not be seen and to catch them unaware. Although Cortés moved quickly, his approach had already been announced by the sentry, who had arrived half an hour before, so all the horses were saddled and bridled and the men armed.

Cortés entered so quietly that he was able to shout, "Close ranks and attack!" before being seen, although the enemy sounded the alarm. Thinking that the many **fireflies and** glowworms flying about were harquebus wicks, they would have fled had a shot been fired.

As Narváez was putting on his coat **of mail**, he was told, "Beware, my lord, Cortés is here," and he answered, "Let him pass, for he is coming to see me." Narváez had his men stationed in the halls and chambers of four small towers; he was in one of the towers with about one hundred Spaniards, its entrance guarded by either thirteen pieces of artillery, or seventeen, as some say [LdeG: all of little use]. Cortés ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval to ascend the tower with forty or fifty companions, while he remained by the entrance to guard it with twenty men. Since the rest of Cortés's soldiers surrounded the other towers, Narváez's men could not come to one another's aid. When he heard the noise close by, Narváez

278. Ibid., 174, adds that Carrasco was reportedly captured by Cortés, who wanted to hang him. Later, he stayed on in New Spain and lived into his nineties.
279. Ibid., 202, reports only that Hurtado was a fellow lookout for Narváez.

wished to come out fighting, despite being warned repeatedly not to. As he left his chamber, Cortés's men speared him, gouging out one of his eyes; he was then seized and dragged down the stairs. When he saw himself before Cortés, he said, "Lord Cortés, count yourself fortunate to have my person under arrest." Cortés responded, "Seizing you is the least of my accomplishments in this land." He had Narváez placed under arrest and sent to Villa Rica, where he remained a prisoner for several years.

The combat lasted a very short time, for within an hour Narváez was seized, the leaders of his company captured, and the rest had their weapons confiscated. While sixteen of Narváez's men died, only two of Cortés's men were killed by an artillery shot. Since the enemy had little time (f. 81) or space for firing the artillery, thanks to Cortés's haste and because the artillery pieces were sealed with wax to keep water out, they killed the men with a single shot. The defeated men used this event to claim that Cortés had bribed the gunner, among others. Cortés behaved with moderation, not harming or insulting the prisoners or those who surrendered; not even Narváez, who had spoken so ill of him. Cortés even allowed Pedro de Malvenda,[280] a servant of Velázquez who came as Narváez's steward, to keep the ships safe and in good condition and gather both his clothing and belongings and those of his master. **(**How superior is one man to the other**!)** What did each captain think, say, and do to the other**?** Seldom or perhaps never did so few defeat so many of their fellow countrymen, especially with the majority in a fortified place, rested, and well armed. **Nevertheless, this is nothing to marvel at, since it was due to the will of Almighty God who governs and rules, and He is capable of much more.**

[Chapter 104]. The Death Toll from Smallpox

The war cost Velázquez much money, Narváez [LdeG: his honor and] an eye, and the Indians many lives, lost not to the sword but to illness. When Narváez's people disembarked a black man with smallpox also came ashore, and he passed it on to the people of the house where he was kept in Cempoala. The disease was transmitted from one Indian to another, and as there were so many who slept and ate together, it spread everywhere rapidly, killing many natives across the land. The inhabitants of most households died, and one half of the residents in many towns were also afflicted. Since smallpox was a new disease for them, and since

280. Ibid., 207, adds that Malvenda, or Maluenda, was a member of an influential mercantile family in Burgos, Spain, and often supplied goods to Hispaniola and Cuba. He later became Cortés's *tesorero real*, "royal treasurer."

they treated their illnesses by bathing, they took baths for it, but were stricken. They even had the custom or vice of taking hot baths followed by cold ones.

It is a miracle for a man to survive smallpox. Those who remained alive were so pockmarked from scratching the many large holes that opened on their faces, hands, and bodies that they gave others a great fright. Hunger overtook them, not so much for bread as for flour. Because they have no mills or bakeries, women simply grind their centli grain between two stones and cook it. When the women fell ill with smallpox, bread became scarce and many people died from hunger. The dead bodies stank so much that no one would bury them, and they filled the streets. And so they would not throw the bodies out into them, they say the authorities toppled the houses over the dead. The Indians called this illness *huey çahuatl*, which means "the great leprosy," and it was so significant an event that they used it to keep count of their years. It seems to me that, in this way, they were made to pay for the bubas they passed on to our people, as I recount in another chapter.

[Chapter 105]. The Mexica Rebel Against the Spaniards

Since (f. 81v) Cortés knew almost all **the men** who came with Narváez, he courteously entreated them to forget the past, as he had done, and to agree to be his friends, in order to accompany him to Mexico, the richest town in the Indies. He returned their weapons, lost by many, and imprisoned only a few of them with Narváez. The horsemen first came out spoiling for a fight, but gave in to his words and promises. In the end, since they all came only to enjoy the fruits of the land, they were pleased to follow and serve him. After he rebuilt the garrison at Veracruz, Cortés sent the ships from Narváez's fleet there. He dispatched two hundred Spaniards to Río Garay, again ordered Juan Velázquez de León and another two hundred to settle Coatzacoalco, and sent ahead a Spaniard with news of the victory. Cortés then departed for Mexico with no little concern for his men who were there, because of the messengers that Narváez had sent to Moteuczoma.

The Spaniard who carried the news was wounded rather than rewarded by the Indian rebels. Although injured, he returned to warn Cortés that the Mexica were up in arms and rebelling; they had burned the four boats, charged the Spaniards' stronghold, brought down a wall and undermined another, set the ammunition on fire, and taken their provisions. The Spaniards were in such dire straits that the natives would have seized or killed them if Moteuczoma had not ordered them to stop

fighting. Not for any of this did they lay down their arms or put an end to their siege, but lightened it only to please their lord. The news saddened Cortés, turning his joy into worry. He hastened to help his friends and companions, and had he delayed, he would have found them dead, rather than alive, or ready to be sacrificed. His best hope against his men's destruction was that Moteuczoma remained in prison.

In Tlaxcala, he counted the Spaniards in his company; there were one thousand foot soldiers and one hundred horsemen, as he had recalled those he had dispatched to settle. He did not stop until he reached Tetzcoco, where he was not met by the noblemen he knew nor was he received on the road by them as before; rather, he found the land depopulated or in upheaval. A Spaniard sent by Alvarado reached Tetzcoco to confirm the above and to tell Cortés to return immediately because the natives' anger would subside with his help. Along with this messenger came an Indian on Moteuczoma's behalf to tell Cortés that what had taken place was not [Moteuczoma's] fault and that [Cortés] should not be angry, for his Spaniards were as alive and healthy as they were before his departure. Moreover, he could return to the lodgings where he first stayed. This news gave Cortés and his men much relief that night, **the eve of San Juan's feast day** [June 24].

The following day, on the feast of San Juan Bautista, he entered Mexico in the afternoon with one hundred horsemen, one thousand Spaniards, and a multitude of friends (f. 82) from Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, and Cholola. No one greeted him; he saw few people in the streets and that some bridges had been destroyed, along with other ominous signs. He arrived at his lodgings, while the Spaniards who did not fit inside went to the Templo Mayor. Moteuczoma came out to the courtyard to receive him, apparently in sorrow over what his men had done. He apologized, and each went to his chamber. Pedro de Alvarado and the other Spaniards could barely contain their joy upon their arrival and that of so many, which restored their lives, so close to being lost. The Spaniards greeted one another, asking how they were, with some recounting as many good events as the others did unfortunate ones.

[Chapter 106]. The Reasons for the Rebellion

Cortés wished to have detailed knowledge of the reason behind the Mexica uprising. He questioned all of them together. Some said that it was due to the messages the natives had received from Narváez; others, that [the Spaniards] were being expelled from Mexico on their ships, as previously planned, for when they fought they were yelled at, "Go away

from here!" Others said that the Indians wanted to free Moteuczoma, shouting during combat, "Release our god and king if you wish to live!" Still others claimed that the natives wanted to steal the Spaniards' gold, silver, and jewels, worth more than 700,000 ducats, because they heard those who came up to them say, "Here you will leave behind the gold you have taken from us." For others it was because [the Mexica] did not want to see the Tlaxcalteca or other peoples who were their mortal enemies there. Finally, many others believed it was because the Spaniards had toppled the idols of their gods and because the devil had told them to do so. Since each of these reasons warranted a rebellion, all of them together proved more than sufficient.

The main reason, however, was entirely different. The Mexica were to celebrate a solemn feast only a few days after Cortés left to see Narváez. They requested permission to hold it in the customary manner from Pedro de Alvarado, Cortés's *alcaide*, "warden," and lieutenant, so that he would not think, as some said, that they were gathering to kill the Spaniards. Alvarado agreed, with the condition that no one be sacrificed during the feast and no weapons carried. More than six hundred noblemen, high-ranking people, and even some lords converged at the Templo Mayor, and some say they numbered more than one thousand. On that night, they made a great noise with drums, conch shells, bugles, and carved bones that whistled loudly. They celebrated their feast with their naked bodies covered with **precious** stones, pearls, necklaces, ribbons, bracelets, and many jewels of gold, silver, and seed pearls. With beautiful feather headdresses, they performed the dance called *macehualiztli*, which means "merit achieved through effort"; thus, an agricultural laborer is called *macehualli*. This dance is similar to the netotiliztli that I have already mentioned: (f. 82v) they place mats with their drums on them on the temple courtyards. They hold each other's hands as they dance in lines that form concentric circles; they dance and respond to the rhythm of the singing. These songs are not profane but holy, for they praise each god during his or her festivity so each will grant them rain, harvests, health, and victory, and they give them thanks for bestowing peace, children, wellness, and other similar gifts. Those versed in **or interpreters of** the [Nahuatl] language and the ceremonial practices say that when they dance in the temples, they perform many routines with their voices and by moving their bodies, heads, arms, and feet, through which they express their good, bad, indecent, or laudable ideas. These movements differ from those found in the netotiliztli. The Spaniards call this dance *areito*, which is a word [for dance] from the islands of Cuba and Santo Domingo.

While the Mexica noblemen were dancing in the courtyard of the Temple of Huitzilopochtli, Pedro de Alvarado went there either of his

own or everyone's accord, I cannot say which. Some say he was warned that the principales of the city had gathered there to plot the mutiny and rebellion that later took place. Others say that when the Spaniards saw them perform such a famous, praiseworthy dance, their greed was triggered by seeing the Mexica so wealthy and adorned with gold **(and it is easier to believe the latter, rather than the rumor that [the Mexica] wanted to mutiny against the Christians)**. Alvarado then positioned ten or twelve Spaniards at each of the entrances, entered the courtyard with more than fifty men, and without Christian piety or restraint he stabbed the dancers to death, seizing what they wore. Although Cortés must have grieved over this, he pretended not to show it so as not to anger the perpetrators, either to avoid conflict among his men or because he would need them to go against the Indians.

[Chapter 107]. The Mexica Threaten the Spaniards

Once Cortés knew the reason for the rebellion, he asked about the enemy's manner of attack. They said that, after rising up in arms, they charged with great fury, fighting and battling against the stronghold for ten days without stopping, during which time they damaged it, as he already knew. In order to guard Moteuczoma so he would not escape to join Narváez—as some said he would—the Spaniards defended themselves only, not daring to leave the house and fight in the streets. Since the Spaniards were few and the Indians many, their number increasing from day to day, they not only tired but despaired. If Moteuczoma had not climbed a rooftop to ask his people to remain calm if they wanted him to stay alive, (f. 83) the Spaniards would **already** be dead, since [the Mexica] stopped their hostilities on seeing him. They also said that when the news of the victory over Narváez became known, Moteuczoma commanded them to relent and stop the fight, which they did willingly, not because they were afraid, as the rumor went, but because they thought all would be killed once Cortés arrived. However, they repented and returned to their arms and artillery as before, with even greater desire and bravery, for they knew there would be much to do once Cortés arrived with so many Spaniards. Some even thought that Moteuczoma had not commanded them to do this.

The Spaniards also recounted many miracles. When they needed water, a hole was dug knee-deep in their courtyard and fresh water welled up, although the soil was salty. The Indians attempted many times to remove the image of our Most Glorious Lady from the altar where Cortés had placed it. When touching it anywhere their hands would

stick and remain glued to it for a while; after which, a sign appeared on their hands, and so they left it. On a day of fierce combat, [the Spaniards] loaded their largest piece of artillery, but the cannonball would not discharge when they tried to fire it to frighten their enemies, who boldly charged them, howling terribly with sticks, arrows, spears, and stones that covered the entire house and street. They screamed, "We will redeem our king, free our houses, and take our revenge!" However, in the thick of combat, the ball shot out with a harrowing sound, even though the gunpowder had not been reloaded or the fuse lit. Since the piece was large and was loaded with both small shot and a cannon ball, these spewed out with great force, killing many and marveling all, who retreated in astonishment.

It was also said that Santiago riding on a white horse and Santa María fought on the side of the Spaniards. The Indians asserted that this horse wounded and killed as many with its mouth and hooves as did the knight with his sword, and that the woman on the altar threw dust in their faces, blinding them. But when they returned home thinking they were blind, they recovered. When they returned to attack the Spaniards' house, they said:

> If we were not **so** afraid of that woman and the man on the white horse, your house would already have been torn down and you cooked, although not eaten, since you are not good to eat, for we tasted your flesh the other day, and it is quite bitter. We will throw you to the **turkey buzzards,** eagles, lions, tigers, and snakes, so they may consume you on our behalf. If despite this, you do not release Moteuczomatzin, **our lord and god who gives us our sustenance,** and leave immediately, you will die a holy death, cooked in chilmolli, and eaten by beasts, for you are not good enough for the stomachs of men. Although Moteuczomatzin is our god and lord, you dared arrest him and touch him with your thieving hands. How the land suffers your presence when it should open up and swallow you, you who take other peoples' belongings! But leave, for our gods, whose religion you have profaned, will give you what you deserve, and if they do not do it soon, we will kill you and strip you of your belongings. Those vile and worthless Tlaxcalteca, your slaves, will not depart without being punished nor go bragging that they took their lords' women and demanded contributions from those to whom they paid tribute.

Such was the boast and bluster of the Mexica. Our men, who were terrified, reprimanded them for all the foolish notions they allowed spread about Moteuczoma. (f. 83v) The Spaniards told them he was mortal and neither better nor different than they, that their gods were useless, their religion false, and ours true and good. Our God is the just and true Creator of all things, and the woman who fought in the battle is the mother

of Christ, the God of the Christians, and the man on the white horse, an apostle of Christ himself who descended from heaven to defend a handful of Spaniards and kill many Indians.

[Chapter 108]. The Dire Straits in Which the Mexica Placed Our People

After hearing this, Cortés spent the night on alert, guarding the building and collecting all the necessary supplies. The next morning, in order to learn what the Indians planned to do about his return, Cortés told them to hold their usual market day with all sorts of goods and to remain calm. Then Alvarado asked Cortés to pretend to be angry and act as if he were going to arrest and punish him for what he had done. His conscience was bothering him, and he thought that if Cortés did this, Moteuczoma and his people would settle down and even intercede on his behalf. Cortés paid no attention; rather (they say), he responded angrily that they were dogs, that he had no need to fulfill any obligations toward them. He then sent a leading Mexica noble who was there to go ahead and hold a market after all.

The Indian understood that the Spaniards were insulting the Mexica and regarded them as little more than beasts. Angry and dejected, he pretended to carry out Cortés's order, but instead issued a call for freedom and made public the insults he heard. In a short while he had stirred up the marketplace. Some destroyed the bridges, others summoned all the residents, and all together they fell on the Spaniards, surrounding their building with screams never heard before. They threw so many stones it seemed like hail, and so many arrows and darts that the walls and courtyard filled up with them, and no one could pass. Cortés exited from one side and another captain from a different one, each with two hundred Spaniards. The Indians fought hard, killing four Spaniards and wounding many more of our people. Few of them died because they found shelter in some nearby houses or under bridges and walls. When our people attacked the streets, they were stopped at the bridges; when they attacked the houses, they were injured by the stones and rocks thrown at them from the rooftops. As the Spaniards retreated, they were vigorously pursued and fires were set in various parts of their house. One section burned so intensely that the fire was not extinguished until some chambers and walls were knocked down to smother it. The enemy would have climbed in with ladders, were it not for the artillery, crossbows, and escopetas placed there.

The fight and combat lasted until nightfall, and even then the shouting and taunting did not stop. The Spaniards slept little that night, for they

repaired the entrances that had been burned and weakened, and they tended the wounded, who numbered more than eighty, putting the chambers in order and organizing the people so they could fight the next day, if necessary. When day came, the Spaniards were attacked even more harshly and by more Indians than the day before, so much so that they fired shots randomly but could not make a dent with their crossbows, escopetas, or the thirteen pieces of artillery they always fired. (f. 84) After **each** shot, ten, fifteen, or even twenty Indians rapidly rushed in to fill the gap, so it seemed that no damage had occurred. Cortés fought with the same number of men as the previous day, taking some bridges, burning houses, and killing their many inhabitants. But no damage was felt, as the Indians were so many and our people so few, that even if they fought the entire day, they could not have defended themselves or gone on the offensive. Although no Spaniard was killed, sixty who were injured by stones and arrows were treated that night. In order to avoid further injuries and damage by the Indians to the houses and from the rooftops, they built three square wood battle wagons[281] with covers and wheels in order to carry the best fighters. One piece of artillery and twenty men with pikes, escopetas, and crossbows fit into each one. Following behind there were **or should be** men with pickaxes who knocked down houses and terraces and directed and assisted [those in] the battle wagons.

[Chapter 109]. The Death of Moteuczoma

Our people busied themselves building the battle wagon and did not come out to fight, but were on the defensive only. Believing, however, that the Spaniards were all badly wounded, the enemies fought with all their might. They shouted insults and injurious words, threatening them with the cruelest death ever faced by a man if they did not surrender Moteuczoma. They charged the house so aggressively that Cortés implored Moteuczoma to command his people from a rooftop to desist and disperse. He ascended **in the company of some Spaniards** and stood at the edge to speak to them. As he began they threw so many masonry stones from below and from the neighboring houses that one, hitting him on the temple, felled him. His own vassals brought him down and killed him, although they would have preferred to gouge out their own eyes. They did not see him, for a Spaniard covered and sheltered him with a shield so they would not hit him in the face by one of the many stones

281. For an illustration of the battlewagons, see John Pohl and Charles M. Robinson III, *Aztecs and Conquistadores* (Botley, Oxford, 2005), 44.

they were throwing. Neither did they believe he was there, despite the Spaniards' shouts and signs.

Cortés announced the wounds and condition of Moteuczoma; some believed him, others did not, although they all fought mightily. After suffering head pain for three days, Moteuczoma died. So the Indians would see that he had died from the stone they had thrown, and not from any harm by the Spaniards, Cortés had Moteuczoma brought out on the shoulders of two imprisoned Mexica nobles, so they would reveal the truth to the city dwellers [*ciudadanos*] who were attacking the building. However, not even this news made them stop their combat and struggle, as many of our people had thought; instead they fought harder, with no respect. On their retreat, they shed many tears at the burial of their king at Chapoltepec, **which was the burial place of the kings.**

In this way Moteuczomatzin died, he who had been held as a god by the Indians and who was, as has been said, a great king. Some say that he had asked to be baptized (f. 84v) around Lent, but they did not baptize him then in order to do so on Easter [Sunday], with the solemnity that such a high sacrament and mighty prince required, even though it would have been better not to delay. However, it could not be done due to the arrival of Pánfilo de Narváez, and when he was wounded the baptism was forgotten in the heat of the fight. They say that Moteuczoma never consented to the killing of a single Spaniard or to do Cortés any harm, although many beseeched him to do so, for he loved Cortés greatly. There are also those who say the contrary and both make good arguments, but our Spaniards could not learn the truth then because they neither understood the language at the time nor could they later find someone in whom Moteuczoma had confided this secret. I can state, however, that he never spoke evil of the Spaniards, and this caused no little anger and discontent among his people. The Indians say he was the best of his lineage and the greatest king of Mexico. It is remarkable that, when kingdoms flourish and reach their peak, they fall and collapse, or acquire a new lord, according to their histories, as we have seen with Moteuczoma, Atabaliba[282] **of Peru, and others such as these**. With the death of Moteuczoma, the Spaniards lost more than the Indians, even if you compare the deaths and destruction that ensued for the former and the contentment and rest for the latter, for once he was dead, they remained in their houses and took a new king.

Moteuczoma practiced moderation in eating **and drinking** and was not a dissolute man, like other Indians, although he had many women **with whom he sired many sons and daughters.** He was generous and

282. Atahualpa.

giving with the Spaniards and with his own people as well, I believe; for if he had acted insincerely, it would show in his face, because those who give unwillingly reveal their heart. They say he was a wise man, but in my view, he was either very wise, as he accepted whatever occurred, or foolish, because he did not perceive it. He was as bellicose as he was religious, since he fought many wars in the field **against neighboring kings.** Some say that he was victorious in nine battles and another nine in hand-to-hand combat. He reigned seventeen years and a few months.

[Chapter 110]. The Fighting Between Them

On Moteuczoma's death, Cortés sent word that he wished to speak with his nephews and other lords and captains, who continued to fight. When they arrived, he addressed them from the same rooftop where Moteuczoma had been killed, saying that, since Moteuczoma was dead, they should lay down their arms, bury him, and elect another king. He wished to attend the funeral as a friend, and they should know that he had not destroyed them or the city, although it was rebellious and obstinate, because of Moteuczoma, who had requested it of him. Since there was no longer anyone who deserved his respect, he would burn their houses and punish them if they did not cease their war and become his friends. (f. 85) They responded that they would not abandon their weapons until they were free and avenged, and since the gods had taken their beloved Moteuczoma, they would know how to elect their rightful king, even without Cortés's advice. With his body, they would do what they did with those of other dead kings. If Cortés wished to live with the gods and keep his friend [Moteuczoma] company, he should come out so they could kill him.

They told Cortés that if he remained in the city, they preferred war to peace. If this angered him, he had two problems, for they were unlike other men who yielded to words. Moreover, they would kill him if he did not leave, since their lord was dead. Indeed, they had not burned the Spaniards' houses and grilled or eaten them out of respect for Moteuczoma. He should depart once and for all, and they would talk about friendship later. Finding them **intractable and** rigid, [Cortés] realized his plans were not going well, as they were asking him to leave in order to capture him when he crossed the bridges. He still pleaded with them, as much for the damage he inflicted as for the harm he received.

Seeing how life and leadership depended on fists and courage, one morning he went with three battle wagons carrying four pieces of artillery, more than five hundred Spaniards, and three thousand Tlaxcalteca

to fight his enemies and demolish and burn their houses. Cortés's men pulled the battle wagons to some large houses next to a bridge; they used ladders to climb to the roofs filled with people and began to fight them. However, they returned shortly to their stronghold without having done much damage to their opponents, with one Spaniard dead and many others injured, and with the battle wagons wrecked. When they heard their noise, so many Indians charged and surrounded our men that there was no time to fire the artillery. They threw so many large rocks from the house and roof that they crushed the battle wagons [LdeG: and their occupants], sending them back in short order. When they saw the Spaniards withdraw into their stronghold, the Indians recovered the houses and streets they had lost and the Templo Mayor, filling the upper structure with five hundred principales, along with many supplies, rocks, long lances, and wide and narrow flintstones. In truth, rocks were the weapons that caused the most damage and were the safest to use. The tower was so high and well built, as I said before, and so near our stronghold that it caused much harm.

In spite of being very sad, Cortés always encouraged his men and led them in battle. Because he could not abide being trapped, he took three hundred Spaniards to combat the Indians on the temple, charging it three or four times in the same number of days; but he never scaled it, as it was too high and had too many defenders with good rocks and weapons. Attacked from behind, the Spaniards fled and rolled wounded down the steps of the Templo Mayor, with the Indians, proud of their success, chasing them all the way to the entrance of the stronghold, with our men weakening by the hour and many complaining. [Cortés's] heart was dedicated entirely to the task, as you can imagine, and since [LdeG: the Indians][283] (f. 85v) succeeded in holding the Templo Mayor and gained other victories, they were fiercer than ever, both in words and deeds. Cortés determined to leave and not return until he had captured the Templo. Tying his shield to his wounded arm, he went, besieged, and attacked the Templo with many Spaniards, Tlaxcalteca, and friends.

Although those at the top defended it furiously, pushing three or four Spaniards down the steps, many came to assist the Indians. Cortés finally climbed and secured the Templo. The Spaniards fought at the top with the Indians until they forced them to jump on the parapets, or walks, that encircled the Templo and measured one paso in width. There were three, with one higher by two estados than the others, or at the level of the chapel rooms. Some Indians fell to the ground when attempting to jump from one parapet to another; once they fell, they

283. This omission is likely an error by the copyist.

were stabbed many times by our men, who remained below. Some Spaniards wrestled with the enemies, throwing themselves at the Indians on the parapets to kill or push them to the ground, leaving none alive.

They fought at the top for three hours, as there were many Indians, and they could not be defeated or killed. In the end, five hundred Indians died in all, valiant men who, had they equal weapons, would have killed more than their number of dead because of their place and courage. The image of our Lady, which **the Indians** could not remove at the start of the rebellion, was never found. Cortés set fire to the chapels and another three towers in which many idols were burned. The natives did not lose their valor when losing the tower, which together with the burning of their gods, hurt them deeply; they continued to assault our stronghold **and later carried on many fights.**

[Chapter 111]. The Mexica Refuse the Truces Proposed by Cortés

Upon considering the enemy's great number, strength, and tenacity, and that his men were tired of fighting and would even leave if the Indians allowed it, Cortés again sued for peace. He called for a truce with the Mexica, saying that since so many of them were dying without killing any Spaniards, they should assess their damage and bad counsel. More hardened than ever, they answered that they did not wish to make peace with those who were so evil to them, killing their men and burning their gods, and they wished even less for a truce, for Cortés was without bread, water, and good health. If they died, they had also killed and injured. They were not gods or immortal men who live forever, but if the Spaniards saw how many remained on the rooftops and temples and in the streets, without counting those in the houses, they would find themselves dying one by one, with the Indians by the thousands and tens of thousands. When those he saw there died, more and more would come, and after them, even more, but when Cortés and his men died, no more Spaniards would come. And if the Indians did not kill them with their weapons, they would surely die from wounds, thirst, and hunger, for although they wished to retreat they would be unable to do so (f. 86) because the bridges and causeways were destroyed, and they had no ships on which to leave by water.

The natives' response gave the Spaniards much to dread and think about. Night fell while they were consumed by worry, hunger, and exhaustion alone, not needing another war to defeat them. Very late that night, half the Spaniards armed themselves and went out, and since their opponents did not fight at night, they easily burned three hundred houses on

one street, entering some and killing those inside. Along with the houses were burned two rooftops near the fort that had caused them damage. The other half of the Spaniards repaired the battle wagons and their house. Having succeeded on their raid, they returned at dawn to the street and bridge where their wagons had been destroyed. Although they encountered great resistance, as their lives depended on it, more so now than their honor, they assailed and burned many towers and houses with rooftops. Of the causeway's eight bridges, they captured four, even though they were so well fortified with adobe and mud barricades that it took the artillery some time to demolish them. They blocked the bridges with the same adobes and used the earth, rocks, and wood from the rubbish to secure them. Wounded and tired, the Spaniards returned to their base, distressed that they had lost more blood and courage than they had gained land.

One day, when they were able to leave, the Spaniards captured and blocked the remaining four bridges, and twenty of their horsemen chased the fleeing enemies to the mainland. While Cortés blocked the bridges and smoothed the surface of the roads for the horses, he received a message that many lords and captains who wished for peace were waiting nearby, and he should go and take a tlamacazqui, a leading priest who was imprisoned, to participate in the negotiations. Cortés went to discuss peace, taking the priest **along.** The tlamacazqui was sent to tell the natives they should lay down their weapons and halt the siege on the stronghold. But he did not return, since all was a pretense carried out only to recover the priest, to assess our men's mood, or to distract them. Despite this they all went to eat, for it was time. No sooner had Cortés seated himself at the table when several Tlaxcalteca entered, shouting that the enemies were armed on the causeway. They had retaken the lost bridges and killed the Spaniards guarding them. Leaving immediately with the horsemen who were ready and several infantry men, he broke the adversary's ranks, of which there were many, and chased them to the mainland.

On their return, since the infantrymen were wounded and tired of fighting and guarding the causeway, they could not maintain their strength **or stop** the many opponents who charged them. The causeway was so full of enemies that the Spaniards could not return to their residence; and not only was the causeway filled but the canals teemed with many canoes, all furiously throwing rocks and lances at our men. Two rocks hit Cortés on the knee, seriously wounding him. Word soon spread throughout the city that he had been killed, which greatly saddened our men and elated the Indians. Despite his wound, however, Cortés lifted his men's spirits by attacking the enemies. At the (f. 86v) last bridge, two horses fell; one freed itself, but both blocked those who were following.

There he turned on the Indians so all the horsemen could pass. In great trouble and danger, Cortés, who was the last, jumped with his horse, and it was a marvel that he escaped. As many threw rocks at him, he returned late that day to the stronghold. After dinner, he sent some Spaniards to guard the causeway and bridges so the Indians would not recover them or bother him at the headquarters that night. The natives were proud of the exploits **they had** that day, although, as I said above, it was not their custom to fight at night.

[Chapter 112]. How Cortés Fled Mexico

Seeing their situation hopeless, Cortés told the Spaniards that they should go, and all were very relieved to hear this, as almost no one had escaped without some sort of injury. Although afraid of death, they were prepared to die, since there were so many Indians that even if they kept slitting their throats like sheep, the task would be endless. They had so little bread they dared not fill themselves and had no gunpowder or cannonballs [LdeG: nor any magazine. Since the house had been seriously damaged, many took care to guard it]. All these reasons were sufficient for them to abandon Mexico and protect their lives, yet it seemed dangerous to turn their backs on the enemy **because** they would suffer the worst part.[284] They especially feared crossing the openings[285] in the causeway where they had entered, since there were no longer any bridges, and no matter where they turned they were assaulted by cares and worries.

They all agreed that they would leave on that **dark** night, which had been signaled by Botello,[286] who thought himself an astrologer or necromancer. He had said many days earlier that if they left Mexico at a certain hour of the night **(**this was the night**)**, they would escape, and if they failed to leave, they would not be saved whether they believed him or not. All then decided to leave that night, and in order to cross the openings in the causeway they constructed a portable wooden bridge. It is very likely that all had planned to do this, and not, as some say, that Cortés departed stealthily,[287] leaving more than two hundred Spaniards in the courtyard and stronghold, who, not knowing he had gone,

284. LdeG uses the Spanish proverb, *Las piedras se levantan contra el que huye*, "the rocks pursue those who flee."

285. These were structural openings in between pillars, which the Spaniards thought of as unfinished archways.

286. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 22, states that Blas Botello cast lots, thus determining that they should leave Mexico Tenochtitlan on 30 June 1520 (Noche Triste). He was among those killed in the exodus.

287. LdeG uses the Spanish saying, *los cenzeros atapados*, "cowbells silenced."

were later sacrificed, killed, and eaten by the Mexica. This could not have happened since it was impossible to leave the city, much less one house. Cortés stated that they ordered him to leave. He asked his steward Juan de Guzmán[288] to open a hall where he had stored gold, silver, jewels, stones, feathers, and rich mantas so that his treasurers and officials could take the royal fifth from it in front of the alcaldes and regidores. He gave them one of his mares and some men to remove and store the royal fifth, saying they could take what they wished from the treasure, as he handed it over to them.

Greedy for the treasure, Narváez's men took as much as they could, but they paid dearly for it since they could neither fight nor walk while carrying the load. The Indians dragged, killed, and ate many of them. Some of the horsemen carried off treasure on the horses' haunches. In the end, everyone took something, as there were more than 700,000 ducats' worth. However, since these were in jewels and large pieces (f. 87), they were bulky. Those who took less did better, for they were less hampered and saved their treasure. Although some say quantities of gold and other things were left there, I do not believe this, because the Tlaxcalteca and other Indians razed the city and took everything.

Cortés gave orders to some Spaniards to take as hostages a son and two daughters of Moteuczoma, Cacama, **king of Tetzcoco,** one of his brothers, and many other great lords [Cortés] had imprisoned. He sent another forty Spaniards to carry the portable bridge and his Indian friends [to transport] the artillery and some centli, **ears of maize,** that were there. At the lead, he placed Gonzalo de Sandoval and Antonio de Quiñones.[289] He placed Pedro de Alvarado at the rear, who was ready with up to one hundred Spaniards. Following orders, they left the house at midnight under a great **rain** cloud and went very quietly so as not to be heard, entrusting themselves to God to keep them out of danger and the city. Cortés took the Tlacopan causeway **(now called Calle de Tacuba),** and everyone followed. They crossed the first gap with the portable bridge they had built. The temple sentinels and the guards of the enemy city sounded their conch shells and shouted that the Christians were leaving. At once and all together **(**since they had no weapons or clothes to put on that hindered them**),** all the **Mexica** chased after them with the loudest cries in the world, yelling, "May the evil ones die,

288. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 65; probably Esteban de Guzmán, who was captured on 30 June 1520 and later sacrificed by the natives.

289. Ibid., 110, states that Antonio de Quiñones (or de Herrera) held several important leadership positions under Cortés and was always loyal to his captain. He was head of Cortés's bodyguard and saved him on more than one occasion. He later died in the Azores after having been stabbed in the course of a disagreement over a young woman.

may he die who has done so much evil to us!" When Cortés placed the portable bridge over the causeway's second opening, there came many Indians who fought to stop him, but at last Cortés struggled so hard that he threw it over the gap and crossed with five horsemen and one hundred Spanish infantrymen. With them, he pressed toward the mainland, swimming across the canals and breaks in the causeway after his wooden bridge was lost.

He left the infantrymen on land with Juan Jaramillo[290] and returned with the five horsemen to take the rest and hasten their march. When he reached them, however, although some were still fighting strong, he found many dead. He lost the gold, the equipment, the artillery, and the prisoners; in the end, he did not find a single man or item that was in the same condition as before. He recruited those he could, marching them forward as he followed. He left Pedro de Alvarado to encourage and gather those who were left behind. But Alvarado could not resist or endure the enemies' charge; on seeing so many companions killed, he realized he could not escape if he stayed behind. He therefore followed Cortés with a lance in his hand, passing over the dead and fallen Spaniards and hearing many lamentations. He came to the last bridge and vaulted to the other side on his lance. His jump astounded the Indians and even the Spaniards, and so great it was that although many tried, they failed and drowned.

At this Cortés paused [LdeG: and even sat down], not to rest but to mourn the dead and the living who were left and contemplate and lament his fall from fortune—the loss of so many friends, so much treasure, such a command, and so great a city and kingdom. Not only did he grieve for the misfortune he now suffered, he feared what was to come. All his men were injured, and he did not know where to turn, being uncertain of shelter or friendship in Tlaxcala. Who would not cry on seeing (f. 87v) the death and ruin of the Christians who had entered with such triumph, pomp, and joy? However, so not all those who were left would perish, he fought and made his way into Tlacopan **(a city near Mexico situated** beyond the causeway**)**. In the chaos of that sad night **(**which was the tenth of July of the year one thousand, five hundred and twenty**)**, there died four hundred and fifty Spaniards, and four thousand Indian friends; **there died** forty-six horses, and, I believe, all the prisoners. Some say more, some say less, but these numbers are closest to the truth.

If this had happened during the day, perhaps not so many would have

290. Ibid., 70–72. Jaramillo was reportedly close to Cortés and was with him on the march to Mexico Tenochtitlan and through the battles. He later married Malintzin while on the trek to Honduras. He received Xilotepec in encomienda and later became a very wealthy man.

died nor would there have been so much noise. But since it was in the dark of night and under a cloud, there were many shouts, yells, laments, screams, and great fright. The Indians, as the victors, gave shouts of "Victory! Victory!" They invoked their gods, insulted the fallen, and killed those who, still standing, defended themselves. Our men, as the vanquished, cursed their disastrous fate, the hour, and the man who had brought them there. Some called out to God; others to Santa María. Others cried, "Help, help, I am drowning!" I could not say if as many died in the water as on land for attempting to swim across or jump over the causeway's gaps and breaks, or because the Indians threw them into the water, unable to overcome them in any other way. And they say that when a Spaniard fell in the water, he did so with an Indian. Since they swam very well, they would take [the Spaniards] to the boats and anywere they wished to disembowel them.

The natives also traveled by many acalles, fighting along the base of the causeway, and they shot as in a barrel, hitting everyone, although they sometimes could tell one another apart by their dress, which resembled a shift. There were so many on the causeway that they knocked each other down in the water and on the land. In this way, they did more harm to their own men than to ours. Had they not stopped to strip the fallen Spaniards, more would have remained alive. Most of our men who were loaded down with clothing, gold, and jewels died. Those survived who carried less gold and marched at the front less fearfully. For this reason, **I say** that the gold killed them, and they died wealthy. After crossing the causeway, the Indians did not pursue our Spaniards, either because they were content with what they had accomplished or because they dared not fight on an open plain. Or it was because they started to cry over the sons of Moteuczoma, whom they had never known until then nor even known they had died. They gave loud cries and laments, pulling their hair because they had been killed.

[Chapter 113]. The Battle at Otumba

In Tlacopan, no one was aware when the Spaniards arrived that they were fleeing and undone. Our men grouped together in the plaza, not knowing what to do or where to go. Cortés, who came from behind to press all his men forward, hurried them to the plain in the countryside before the townsmen armed themselves, joined the forty thousand Mexica, who were no longer in tears, (f. 88) and pursued them. Taking the lead, he pushed forward with his remaining Indian friends **the Tlaxcalteca** through some cultivated fields and fought until he reached a high hill with a tower and

temple that for this reason is now called Nuestra Señora de los Remedios. Some of the trailing Spaniards and many Indians were killed before they could ascend the temple. Cortés lost most of the remaining gold and could barely free himself from the multitude of enemies. The twenty-four horses that survived could no longer run due to fatigue and hunger, nor could the Spaniards lift their arms or their feet from the ground due to all the fighting and their own thirst, hunger, and exhaustion.

Covered with mud and soaked to the bone, they had worked day and night without stopping to rest or eat. Cortés and his men refreshed themselves in a good-sized room at the temple. They drank, eating very little or nothing, and waited to see what the many yelling and charging Indians who surrounded them would do next. Since they had no food **(**a war worse than one waged with their enemies**),** they lighted many fires from the firewood for sacrifices and left the temple around midnight so they would not be heard. Not knowing the road, they guessed the way until a Tlaxcalteca guided them, saying he would take them to his land if the Mexica did not stop them. With his help, they moved on.

Cortés organized his company, placing the wounded men and clothing in the middle and the healthy men and horses at the advance and rear guards. Hearing their faint noise, some nearby spies called out, and many natives pursued the Spaniards until daybreak. The five men in the advance guard detected Indian squadrons waiting to rob them, which all the Spaniards took care to chase away. However, on seeing their small number the natives joined those who were following the Spaniards to pursue them, fighting for three leagues until our men climbed another hill where there was a temple with a good tower and room **(which is why it is called Tenayucan**[291]**).** They spent the night there, although they had nothing to eat. At dawn, the Otomi Indians attacked them, but they were more frightened than harmed. Leaving the place, they came to a large town **called Cuauhtitlan**[292] by a road so rugged that our horses could not injure our enemies, but they could not reach our men, either. Out of fear, the townspeople fled to another town, so our men stayed there for two nights resting and taking care of themselves and the animals. Finding some provisions, they satisfied their **thirst and** hunger, although not completely, since there was no one **to provide more.**

When they departed, **the Christians** were pursued by an infinite num-

291. Tenayocan, "place of walls" or "covered with walls," sometimes in the sense of fortified barricades. We thank James Lockhart for his assistance with this term. Gerhard, *Guide*, 247, describes Tenayocan as an autonomous Tepaneca polity. It was north of Mexico Tenochtitlan, on the way to Cuauhtitlan.

292. Or Quauhtitlan. Gibson, *Aztecs*, 39, describes Cuauhtitlan as an influential Tepaneca polity, located north of Mexico Tenochtitlan on the western shore of Lake Xaltocan.

ber **of Mexica**, charging hard and wearing them down. Since the Indian guide from Tlaxcala was unfamiliar with the road, they went off it and came to a hamlet with a few houses, where they slept the night. They continued their journey the next morning, followed always by the enemies, who harassed them during the day. Cortés was hit so hard by a shot from a sling that he lost consciousness, either because the stone shards were not removed properly or because of the hardships he endured. He recuperated in an empty field but removed his men to keep from being surrounded. On their march, they were attacked so fiercely by a multitude of natives that five Spaniards and four horses were injured in the fight. (f. 88v) One horse died, and they ate it, leaving not even the hair or bones, as they say. They considered it a good meal, although not enough for everyone. There was no Spaniard that was not dying of hunger. I will not mention the labors and injuries, which by themselves were sufficient to finish them off. Our Spanish nation suffers more hunger than any other, and Cortés's men most of all, for they never even had time to gather any plants to eat raw.

They left the houses the following morning, and since they feared that many people might come there, Cortés sent the horsemen to carry those most wounded and suffering on their haunches, while those less wounded should avail themselves of the horses' tails and stirrups or make crutches and other supports so they could walk, if they did not wish to become the enemies' next meal.

The directive greatly helped what occurred **or happened** next, since one Spaniard saved another by carrying him for a league across a plain, **which was between Acolman and Teotihuacan.**[293] Many Indians charged, spreading out across the countryside and surrounding them. The attack and fight were so intense that our men thought it the last day of their lives, for the Indians **proved extremely valiant, as they** dared to fight eye to eye and hand to hand. It was a shame to see our Spaniards dragged down by them and hear their remarks, whether because of the Indians' vigor or our men's lack of it due to their hunger, hardships, and injuries. **Despite all his troubles,** Cortés went about **confronting his men**; when he saw what happened, he entrusted himself to God, invoked his patron San Pedro and, spurring his horse, penetrated and broke the ranks of the enemies. He came upon the native who carried the royal standard of the Mexica, a captain general, throwing him to the ground and killing him with two thrusts of his lance. After Cortés toppled the native and his standard, the Spaniards brought down the **rest** of

293. Gerhard, *Guide*, 311–12, adds that both were important, good-sized polities north of Tetzcoco in Acolhuaque territory.

the banners, and no Indian was left fighting. All dispersed as best they could, fleeing as was their habit in war. On seeing [the Indians'] general killed and their standard lowered, our men took courage and chased them on horseback, killing an infinite number of them—so many, they say, that I cannot recount. Some confirm the number at two hundred thousand and that the battle took place at Otumba. From the time the Indies were discovered, there has been no greater feat or victory. The Spaniards who witnessed the battle that day say that no man ever fought or led like Hernando Cortés, and that he alone freed them all.

[Chapter 114]. The Welcome Given the Spaniards in Tlaxcala

Victorious but exhausted from killing Indians, Cortés and his Spaniards went to sleep in a house on a plain **called Apan,**[294] from which (f. 89) some mountains in Tlaxcala could be seen. [LdeG: Although they were content there, they worried that the bellicose natives of this region would not be their friends. Nothing turns out favorably for he who is in flight, unfortunate, or defeated; everything is against him and is the opposite of what he needs or believes. That night Cortés served as the company's watchman, not because he was better rested or healthier than his men but because he wanted to share in their toil, hardship, and loss. The next morning they walked along the plain toward a mountain range in the province of Tlaxcala.] They refreshed themselves at an abundant spring, **called Tlatzcayocan,** which marked the Mexica boundary, according to their Indian friends. The Spaniards then came to Huazilipan,[295] a dependency of Tlaxcala with four thousand households, where they were well received and provisioned. There, they rested and tended their sick for three days. Although some townspeople did not want to give them a thing without being paid, most were generous.

At this time, **the three lords of Tlaxcala, who were** Maxixca, Xicotencatl, Acxotecatl, along with **Tlehuexolotl, Citlalpopoca,** many other lords from Tlaxcala and Huexotzinco, and fifty thousand soldiers, encountered the Spaniards here. They were on their way to Mexico to assist them, having been informed of the revolt but not of their flight, injuries, and losses. Others say that these lords, knowing of the Spaniards' downfall and retreat, came out to assuage them and offer aid on their republic's behalf. The native lords were grieved by the state the Spaniards

294. Ibid., 52, states that "the llanos of Apan occupy a high basin in a range separating the Gulf drainage from [central] Mexico." He adds that it was a frontier province, probably with a Mexica garrison.

295. Hueyotlipan in both LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 225, and Gerhard, *Guide*, 220.

were in but pleased to have come upon them there. They shed tears, saying, "Indeed, we warned you that the Mexica were evil traitors, and you would not believe it. We are saddened by your suffering and ruin. If you wish, let us go to Mexico to avenge this and other previous offenses, along with the deaths of your Christians and our Tlaxcalteca; otherwise, come with us, for we will nurse your wounds in our homes."

Cortés's spirits lifted upon learning of the support and friendship of such warlike men, which he had not taken for granted. He thanked them for coming and their good will, giving them some of the remaining jewels and saying there was time enough to engage the Mexica, for they first needed to treat the wounded. Since he did not wish to return to Mexico, the lords implored him to let them go fight the Colhuaque, who, intent on stealing, still abounded in the region. Cortés gave them healthy or less-injured Spaniards, with whom they fought and killed many Colhuaque, driving them back. The Tlaxcalteca, followed by our men, returned victorious and joyful to their city. They say that more than twenty thousand men and women came out to welcome them with food. I believe that most did so to see the Spaniards, for they loved and cared for them deeply. They also may have wished to learn about their fellow Tlaxcalteca, **both children and relatives,** who had gone to Mexico, as few returned. The Spaniards were well received in Tlaxcala: Maxixcatzin gave his house and bed to Cortés, and the noblemen and principales gave theirs to the rest of his men, granting many favors, which the most injured relished all the more for they had not slept in beds for fifteen days. Much is owed to the Tlaxcalteca for their loyalty and support **of Captain Cortés,** and especially to Maxixca, who threw Xicotencatl down the steps of their main temple because he advised the townspeople to kill the Spaniards in order to reconcile with the Mexica. (f. 89v) Maxixca then gave two orations, one to the men and the other to the women, saying they had not had salt or worn cotton garments for years, not until they became the Spaniards' friends. The Tlaxcalteca boast as much about this relationship as they do their initial resistance and battle against Cortés in Teoacatzinco. Therefore, whenever they hold festivities or receive a viceroy, about sixty or seventy thousand of them reenact in a field the skirmishes and battles they fought with and against Cortés.

[Chapter 115]. What the Soldiers Petitioned Cortés

Before he departed to meet Moteuczoma, Cortés left in Tlaxcala more than 20,000 pesos in gold, along with the gifts exchanged between him and his companions and that which remained after the royal fifth was

sent to the king with Montejo and Portocarrero. He had also left behind mantas and feather goods so as not to carry an unnecessary load and burden and to see if [the Tlaxcalteca] were good friends **and trustworthy men**. He wanted to ensure that while he was in Mexico he had money to distribute among the Spaniards who remained as guards and settlers in Veracruz, for it was fair to give them their share. When he returned after defeating Narváez, he wrote to a captain to take all the gold and belongings [stored in Tlaxcala] and distribute it among six residents [of Veracruz], each according to his merit. The captain sent a force of fifty Spaniards and five horses, but as they made their way back they were captured with the gold and goods and killed by the Colhuaque, who had been stirred up and raiding for many days, since Narváez's arrival and promises. Pained to learn of the loss of so many Spaniards and so much gold and worried that a similar evil or war had befallen the Spaniards at Veracruz, Cortés sent a messenger there. He was relieved to hear on the messenger's return that they were all well and healthy and the natives in the region safe and peaceful. Some of his men wished to go there, but as he would not allow it, they raged against him, complaining:

> What is Cortés thinking? What does he wish to do with us? Why does he want to keep us here where we will die an evil death? What do we owe him that he does not allow us to leave? We are injured and our bodies are rotting and full of wounds and sores, and we have lost blood, our strength, and our clothes. We find ourselves impoverished, weak, ill, and surrounded by enemies in a strange land. We have no hope of escaping our fate. We would have to be insane or stupid to be put in the same danger as before. We do not wish to die foolishly at Cortés's side, for due to his insatiable thirst for glory and power he has no regard for his own life, much less ours. He does not (f. 90) care that there are not enough men, artillery, weapons, and horses to wage war on this land; or that he will want for food, which is our major concern. He is truly mistaken to put his trust in the Tlaxcalteca, who, like all Indians, are voluble, inconstant, and impressed by novelties. He seems fonder of the Colhuaque than he is of Spaniards. Although the Tlaxcalteca now hide their intentions and make compromises, when they see the Mexica army charging us, they will turn us in alive to be sacrificed and eaten. There is truly never any comfort or lasting friendship among people of different religions, languages, and dress.

After these complaints, they formally petitioned Cortés on the king's behalf and in all their names to leave immediately for Veracruz with no further excuse or delay before their enemies blocked the roads, took the ports, and stole the provisions, leaving them isolated and betrayed. Veracruz was a much better location for Cortés to refurbish his company if he wanted to return to Mexico or set sail, if necessary. Troubled and

confused by the request and their determination, Cortés realized that it was all a ruse to make him leave and later do with him as they wished. Since this clashed with his objectives, he responded:

[Chapter 116]. Oration in Response to the Official Petition

My Lords,

I would do what you request and order if it were for your benefit. If necessary, I would risk my possessions and my life for any one of you, and all the more for all of you. I am compelled to do so by what, unless I am ungrateful, I will never forget. Do not believe that by not doing what you so insistently demand, I diminish or slight your authority, when in truth my refusal increases and strengthens its reach. If we go, your authority ends; if we stay, it is both preserved and enhanced. What nation that has ruled over the world has not been vanquished at least once? Which of the most famous captains, I ask you, ever retreated because he lost one battle or was once expelled from somewhere? Not one. Without persevering, he would not have triumphed or claimed victory. He who retreats seems to flee, and all jeer him, giving chase. But everyone favors and fears whoever shows his face, displays resolve, and remains calm. If we leave this place, our friends will think us cowards and no longer seek our friendship; our enemies will think us timorous and not fear us, and our reputation will be sorely diminished. Is there anyone among us who does not consider it dishonorable if it is said that he fled? The more we are so labeled, the greater is our shame. I marvel at the immensity of your courage in battle, for you spoil for a fight and become energized in combat. Yet now that such a just and laudable war is offered you, you refuse (f. 90v) or fear it, a reaction foreign to your nature [LdeG: as Spaniards]. Do you perhaps abandon war because you are called to it by one who boasts of his armor yet wears none? Never before in the Indies and the New World has a single Spaniard been known to retrace even a step because of fear, hunger, or injury. Do you want people to say that Cortés and his men turned back when they were safe, satisfied, and out of danger? May God never allow it to occur. Wars are built on one's reputation. What better one could be had than to remain in Tlaxcala against your enemy's wishes and declare war without their daring to anger you? This shows you are safer [LdeG: and stronger] here than anywhere else. Here in Tlaxcala, you are safe, strong, and honorable. Here you have a good supply of the medications needed for your healing and well-being and many other gifts I will not mention that

improve your health day by day. Where you were born you had nothing of the sort. I will summon the peoples of Coatzacoalco and Almería so we will be many Spaniards, and even if they do not come, our numbers will suffice, as we were fewer when we entered this land without friends. As you know, it is not the number but the spirit that counts in war, and it is not the many but the most valiant who are victorious. I have seen a man in this company **(who is Juan de Cabra**[296]**)** destroy an entire army, as Jonathan and many others did before.[297] Each one of us has defeated a thousand or even ten thousand Indians, as David did the Philistines. I will soon receive horses from the [Caribbean] islands, and weapons and artillery, of which we have plenty, from Veracruz, which is quite near. Do not worry about provisions, for I will provide them in great abundance, since they always follow the victor who controls the battlefield, as we will with our horses. I myself guarantee the promises sworn to me by the people of this city that they will be your good, loyal, and eternal friends. If they had other designs, what better time than this to have carried them out, when we lay in pain on their beds and in their homes, alone, disabled, and **(**as they say**)** wasting away? The Tlaxcalteca will not only help you as friends; they will also serve you, since they would rather be your slaves than subjects of the Mexica, whom they despise, while they have only affection for you. So you may see this happen and all else I have said, I want to test them and you in combat against the people of Tepeaca, who killed twelve Spaniards a few days ago. If we lose, I will do what you ask, and if we win, you will do as I say.

With these discourses, the men lost their desire to leave Tlaxcala for Veracruz and told Cortés they would follow his command. The reason may have been the hope he inspired in them for the outcome (f. 91) of the Tepeaca war. Or, better said, a Spaniard never says no to war, for he regards it as dishonorable and disgraceful.

[Chapter 117]. The War at Tepeaca

Relieved after the exchange, Cortés was free of the worry that tormented him. If he had really carried out what his companions wished, Mexico could not have been recaptured. They would have been killed on the road, for they had a very dangerous journey ahead had they continued

296. See above, note 277.

297. Presumably the reference is to Jonathan, a courageous son of Saul who battled the Philistines (1 Samuel 14:1–47).

(as was their intention) to the islands after stopping to repair at Veracruz. Mexico would truly have been lost and Cortés finished, along with his reputation; understanding his situation well, however, he applied the spirit and wisdom we have described above. Cortés's wounds healed, as did those of his companions. Some Spaniards died because they had not cared for their wounds earlier, leaving them dirty and uncovered, or from weakness and fatigue, according to the surgeons. Others were left lame or maimed, and this was no small loss or shame, but most of the Spaniards recovered and healed quite well.

Twenty days later, Cortés declared war on the people of Tepeaca, a large nearby town, because **these Indians** had killed twelve Spaniards who were traveling to Mexico from Veracruz. Being members of the Colhua alliance, they were assisted by the Mexica as they ransacked the lands of Tlaxcala, as **Lord Captain** Xicotencatl said. Cortés asked Maxixca and other local lords to accompany him. After consulting their republic and following everyone's advice and will, they gave him [LdeG: more than] forty thousand men, many tamemes to carry loads, and diverse provisions and supplies. He led this army, along with the horses and all the Spaniards who could walk. He requested that Tepeaca, to compensate for the killing of the twelve Spaniards, become his friend, swear obedience to the Spanish emperor, and refuse shelter to any Mexica or Colhua. The people of Tepeaca answered that the Spaniards had been killed for a just cause, since they attempted to cross their lands during wartime by force and without permission. The Colhuaque and Mexica were their lords and friends, and they would host them whenever they came. They did not wish to be friends with the Spaniards or obey whom they did not know; therefore, they should immediately turn back to Tlaxcala, if they did not wish to die.

Cortés offered them peace many times, but as they did not want it he waged war in earnest against them. Both the Tepeaca and their allies the Colhuaque were very fierce; they took the fortified passes, blocking the first approach **of the Christians, who were fighting badly.** They fought well and often, since there were many valiant men among them. In the end, however, they were killed and defeated without a single Spaniard dying, although many Tlaxcalteca fell in the field. Seeing that neither their army nor that of the Mexica sufficed to stop the Spaniards, the lords and republic of Tepeaca offered themselves to Cortés as vassals of the emperor, pledging to drive the Colhuaque from their land and allowing him free rein to punish those who had killed the Spaniards. Therefore, Cortés enslaved the people involved in the killing of the twelve Spaniards, extracting the royal fifth from them. Others say that he punished them all in the same way for not having obeyed

his commands and for their rebelliousness, because they were passive sodomites, idolaters, and cannibals. He did this so others, who were many, would fear the Spaniards, for if he did not, they would rebel. In any event, Cortés enslaved them, and in the twenty days or so that this war lasted, he tamed and pacified this large province, driving out the Colhuaque. He brought down idols, ensured the obedience of the local lords, and for greater security, he established a villa called Segura de la Frontera,[298] naming a cabildo to guard it, so both Spaniards and Indians could come and go safely along the road between Mexico and Veracruz, which ran through these parts. (f. 91v) The peoples of Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, and Cholola served in this war as true friends, saying that they would perform even better in the fight against Mexico. With the victory, the Spaniards regained their purpose and reputation in this province, which had them for dead.

[Chapter 118]. How the People of Huacachola[299] Submitted to Cortés After Killing the Colhuaque

While Cortés was at **the villa of** Segura, the lord of Quauhquechollan sent messengers to tell him in confidence that he and his vassals would submit to Cortés if he were delivered from the servitude of the Colhuaque **and Mexica kings,** who not only consumed their possessions but also took their women and forced excessive obligations on them. Several Mexica captains and many of their soldiers had lodged in Quauhquechollan and various hamlets in the province, and in a nearby place **called** Mexinca thirty thousand **Mexica** defended the entrance by land to Mexico. [The Quauhquecholteca] told Cortés that they could seize the captains if he sent his Spaniards to help them. Cortés was very pleased with this embassy, and it was truly a source of encouragement, as [the Spaniards] were beginning to secure more of the land and a greater reputation than their own people thought possible only a few days before. He honored the messengers, praised their lord, and gave them more than two hundred Spaniards, thirteen horsemen, and thirty thousand Tlaxcalteca and other Indian friends who served in his army.

They first traveled a distance of at least eight leagues to Cholola. As

298. Thomas, *Conquest*, 149, identifies Tepeaca and Segura de la Frontera as the same entity.

299. Gerhard, *Guide*, 55–66, notes that Quauhquechollan (and hereinafter) was located on the eastern side of Mts. Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl and was an influential state with dynastic ties to Calpan and Huexotzinco. However, there was also a Mexica garrison in its territory.

they traversed the territory of Huexotzinco, a local resident told the Spaniards that they had been betrayed because Quauhquechollan and Huexotzinco were double-crossing them. They had agreed to lead them to Quauhquechollan, which was well fortified, to please the Colhuaque, whose confederation they had recently joined as friends. Whether out of fear, or to learn more about this accord, Captains Andrés de Tapia, Diego de Ordaz, and Cristóbal de Olid arrested the Quauhquechollan messengers and the Huexotzinco captains and principales who were with them, returning to Cholola. From there, they sent them as prisoners to Cortés with Domingo García de Alburquerque,[300] along with a letter describing their great misgivings and warning him about the situation. After reading the letter, Cortés interrogated the prisoners, only to discover that his captains had misunderstood them, for the messengers had agreed to lead our people into Quauhquechollan unnoticed in order to kill the Colhuaque. But the Spaniards believed that it was either a plot to kill them or the informant had deceived them. [Cortés] reassured his captains and released the grumbling messengers, who requested that he join them so no disaster would befall their company.

Cortés reached Cholola on the first day and Huexotzinco on the second. He then planned with the messengers how and when they would enter, instructing those in the city to secure the entrances to the Mexica captains' chambers so they could better seize and sooner kill them. They did as promised, fooling the sentinels, encircling the captains, and fighting with their opponents. Cortés left an hour before dawn, and by ten in the morning he reached his enemies. Just before he entered Quauhquechollan, many residents came out, bringing more than forty Colhuaque prisoners as a sign that they had been true to their word. They took him to a great building where the Mexica captains were fighting (f. 92) with more than three thousand locals, who had them surrounded. Upon their arrival, they all pressed on the Mexica with such fury and in such numbers that neither Cortés nor the Spaniards could keep them from killing nearly everyone. Many Mexica died before his arrival, and those who remained fled toward the more than thirty thousand natives who were coming from the garrison to help their captains. They set the city on fire while its residents were busy and distracted by fighting and killing their enemies. When Cortés learned of this, he and the Spaniards came at them, breaking their ranks with his horsemen, forcing their retreat all the way up a high, large hill, where neither

300. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 60, adds that García de Alburquerque had apparently been with Cortés since the Spaniards landed at Potonchan, and in this instance he took part in the exchange of the messages.

group could surround the other. Two horses were trapped, one of them died, and many of the enemy fell to the ground from exhaustion rather than wounds, as they died from the heat. Since our friends soon arrived, well rested for the fight, it was not long before the field was emptied of the living and filled with the dead. After the massacre, the Colhuaque abandoned their quarters, which our people sacked and burned. It was worth seeing the furnishings and provisions that were found inside, and the gold, silver, and feathers they wore. They had brought lances taller than pikes in order to kill the horses, which, if they knew how, they could well have done. On that day, Cortés led more than one hundred thousand armed men on the battlefield, and it was a marvel to behold their number and the speed with which they came together.

Quauhquechollan, a city of more than five thousand households, is located on a plain between two rivers with ravines so steep that they allow few entrances on horseback. The city wall, made of stone masonry, is four estados high, including a defensive parapet, and has only four tall, narrow gates behind which are stored many rocks for throwing. When warned, the Colhuaque easily defended the city. Quauhquechollan is flanked by many rugged mountains on one side and a large field for planting on the other, and its entire territory has the same number of residents as the city. During his stay of three days there, Cortés received some messengers from Ocopaxuin **or Acapetlahuacan,**[301] a town four leagues distant, near the volcano they call Popocatepetl. They came to offer themselves to him, saying that since their lord had left them to join the Colhuaque, [Cortés] should approve the election of one of this lord's brothers, who was a friend and very fond of the Spaniards. Accepting their obeisance on the emperor's behalf, Cortés allowed them to install the lord they chose, and then departed.

[Chapter 119. LdeG: The Capture of Itzocan][302]

Before he left Quauhquechollan, Cortés was told that there were some Colhuaque in the town of Itzocan,[303] a distance of four leagues, who were threatening him as they inflicted damage on his native friends. He went there, came in by force, and drove out the enemies; some ran

301. Gerhard, *Guide*, 55, describes Acapetlahuacan as a site between Quauhquechollan and Calpan.

302. C. or the copyist has no title for this chapter. The copyist added the title in the margin later.

303. Gerhard, *Guide*, 160, reports Itzocan as a "large and important kingdom," with close ties to the Mexica.

out the entrances, others jumped from the parapets. He took numerous captives after giving chase for a league and a half. In the end, of the six thousand who guarded the town, few escaped him or from the river nearby, as many drowned where its bridge was destroyed for strategic purposes. Of our men, the horsemen crossed easily, but the rest were delayed. Cortés already had one hundred and twenty thousand men and even more joined his army from many cities and provinces due to his fame and victories. A place of trade, Itzocan produces fruit and cotton **because of its warm climate.** It has three thousand **heads of household** [LdeG: houses], good streets, one hundred temples with one hundred towers, and a fortress on a small hill. The rest is on a plain, with deep ravines cut by a river (f. 92v) that flows around it. Its large wall and parapet were made of stone, where many smooth rocks were kept to level the land. A round and fertile valley lies close, which is irrigated by man-made canals. Itzocan was deserted by its people, who had fled with their belongings to the forested heights of a nearby mountain range, hoping to defend themselves there. Cortés's Indian friends took whatever they found, and he burned both idols and temples, releasing two prisoners so they could summon the lord and residents, promising not to harm them.

On the third day, due to the reassurances and because they wanted to return to their homes **(**for the Spaniards did not mistreat those who surrendered**),** some local principales came to offer themselves and beg forgiveness on behalf of the entire town. Cortés pardoned them and accepted them as subjects, and within two days Itzocan was populated as before, with the prisoners released. However, since the local lord did not come, out of fear or because he was a relative of Moteuczoma, there was much debate between the people of Itzocan and those of Quauhquechollan over who should be appointed lord. The former wanted the bastard son of a lord whom Moteuczoma had killed **a while ago**; the latter argued for a grandson of the absent lord because he was a son of the lord of Quauhquechollan. At last, Cortés's authority prevailed. It was agreed that the new lord not be the bastard son, but the son of the lord of Quauhquechollan, as he was legitimate and a close relative of Moteuczoma on his mother's side. As was said above, it is customary in this land for the father to be succeeded by the sons they have had with the female relatives of Moteuczoma, even if they have older sons. Cortés ordered two noblemen from Itzocan and one from Quauhquechollan **to take [the lord's son] as their lord and** raise him, serving as regents, since he was a child of ten. Once the succession was settled and the land pacified, the ambassadors from eight towns in

the province of Claoxtomacan **or Huasteca,**[304] about forty leagues away, came to offer themselves to Cortés, saying that they had not killed any Spaniards or taken up arms against him. His fame was such that it spread over many lands, and all held him for more than a man. Many ambassadors came to him, but they will not be accounted for because they were not from afar.

[Chapter 120]. The Great Authority Cortés Held over the Indians

Having accomplished all these exploits, Cortés returned to Segura and each Indian to his home except for those he took from Tlaxcala in order to save time for the war against Mexico and not lose the opportunity for more wars, since he was meeting with great success. He dispatched a servant to Veracruz to take four ships from Narváez's fleet and travel to Santo Domingo to gather soldiers, horses, swords, crossbows, artillery, gunpowder, and ammunition, as well as sails, canvas, shoes, and many other items. He wrote to Rodrigo de Figueroa and the Audiencia, describing his situation and everything he had achieved after being driven out of Mexico. He asked for their favor and help so that his servant could return soon and well supplied. He also sent twenty horsemen, two hundred Spaniards, and many native (f. 93) friends to **the provinces of** Zaclatami and Xalatzinco,[305] which were Mexica subject towns on the road from Veracruz that had risen in arms, killing some Spaniards who passed through.

On their arrival, the Spaniards declared their petitions and orders and then engaged in battle. Even though they restrained themselves, there was fire, killing, and looting. Whether by necessity or diplomacy, some of the lords and principales from those towns came to give themselves up, asking for [Cortés's] forgiveness and pledging to never again take up arms against the Spaniards. He pardoned and sent them friends, after which his army returned. In order to spend Christmas **(**which was twelve days away**)** in Tlaxcala, he left a captain with sixty Spaniards in the new villa of Segura de la Frontera to guard the road and sow fear in the neighboring towns. He sent the rest of his army ahead and stopped for the night with twenty horsemen in Coliman **or Amoçoc,**[306] a friendly city

304. Huaxteca (and hereinafter). Gerhard, *Guide*, 211–12, states that the Huaxteca were related linguistically to Maya-speaking peoples. The polity was well north of Veracruz and a part of the region of Pánuco.

305. Thomas, *Conquest*, 449, locates Zautla and Xalatzingo on the road from Veracruz to Tlaxcala.

306. Colunán in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 237. Gerhard, *Guide*, 221, shows Amozoc to be located fairly close to Cuetlaxcoapan (Puebla de los Angeles).

whose residents wanted to see him in order to elect with his authority many lords and captains in place of those who had died of smallpox. He stayed for three days, during which the new lords were installed, and they later became his good friends.

He arrived in Tlaxcala the next day and was received in triumph six leagues outside the city, for he had led a truly successful campaign. His great friend Maxixca had already died **(**from the smallpox brought by a black man on Narváez's ship**),** and he mourned him in the Spanish manner. Cortés named the eldest of Maxixca's sons **(**who was about twelve years old**)** as lord of his father's realm at the republic's behest, which it said belonged to him. It was no little honor to give and take away lordships nor to be respected or feared as he was, as no one dared accept the succession and realm of one's father without [Cortés's] will and permission. Cortés made certain that everyone's weapons were readied and hurried along the construction of the brigantines, for the wood for them had been cut before his departure for Tepeaca. He sent to Veracruz for the sails, rigging, nails, and other necessary items from the ships he had sunk. Since they lacked tar, which was not known or used in this land, he asked some Spanish sailors to go make some on a mountain near Tlaxcala.

[Chapter 121]. The Brigantines Cortés Built, and the Spaniards He Assembled to Fight Mexico

Cortés's prosperity and riches increased his fame so much during Moteuczoma's captivity and upon his victory over Narváez that all the Spaniards in Cuba, Santo Domingo, and the other islands joined him in groups of twenty, or however they could. Many of those who went left their lives along the way, for they were killed by people from Tepeaca and Xalatzinco **(**as was already said**)** or by other natives who dared to attack, seeing them arrive in small parties and being aware that Cortés had been chased out of Mexico. Still, so many arrived in Tlaxcala that Cortés's army was reinforced, and he was encouraged to hasten the war. He could not keep spies in Mexico because the Tlaxcalteca were easily known by their distended lips, ears, and other traits. Since the Mexica took care to guard and be watchful, (f. 93v) Cortés was not as well informed of the city's situation as he wished in order to make all the necessary preparations.

He had learned only after speaking with a Colhua captain imprisoned in Quauhquechollan that, due to Moteuczoma's death, the new lord of Mexico was his **younger brother** [LdeG: nephew] called

Cuitlahuac,[307] lord of Iztacpalapan, an astute and valiant man who had battled Cortés, driving him out of Mexico. Cuitlahuac had fortified the city with many trenches and barricades and many types of weapons, particularly some tall lances to use against horses, which were later found in the Colhua garrisons located in Quauhquechollan and Tepeaca. If they killed or chased the Spaniards from their lands, he forgave all his subject lords and peoples all tributes and taxes for one year's time, or as long as the war lasted. This measure gave him much credit among his vassals and encouraged them to resist and even attack the Spaniards. Knowledge of their use of lances was important, if those who carried them in war were skilled enough to wait for the horses' [charge] before wounding them. What the prisoner said was true, save that Cuitlahuac had died of smallpox, and Quauhtemoctzin, the nephew **or first cousin** of Moteuczoma **(**and not the brother, as some pretend**)**,[308] was already the ruler. This valiant and warlike man **(**as we will recount below**)** sent his messengers across the land, some to release his vassals from tribute, others to give or promise much to those who were not his subjects.

They argued for the justice in following and favoring Quauhtemoc instead of Cortés, in assisting natives rather than foreigners, and in defending their ancient religion rather than accepting that of the Christians, who wished to be masters of what was not theirs. For they were such that if kept from the land, they would not be content with taking it all, but would enslave and kill its peoples, as confirmed to Quauhtemoc **by his fathers, who foretold it. With these words, Quauhtemoc renewed the spirits of his vassals and all the towns on the face of the earth. Thus it was that the messengers went everywhere to summon and prepare the armies with such success that the natives were soon stirred up. In a matter of days, so innumerable were the natives who heeded this call that the towns near Mexico overflowed with soldiers and endless numbers of captains, and they went on review every day. In response, our good captain [Cortés] raised the spirits of his Spaniards, his Tlaxcalteca friends, and the friends from other friendly provinces, and all looked forward to the combat. When Cortés saw his people well armed**

307. *CC*, 1:57, notes that Cuitlahuatzin died in the same year he was installed, 2-Flint, having ruled no more than eighty days.

308. Ibid., 1:55–57, states that Quauhtemoctzin was the fourth son of Ahuitzotl, and that he was installed in the next year, 3-House, 1521, as the eleventh emperor to rule Mexico Tenochtitlan. He reportedly later converted to Christianity and was named don Hernando de Alvarado Quauhtemoctzin. He was tortured and then hanged by Cortés on the trip to Honduras in 7-House, 1525.

and at the ready with enough Spaniards and native friends, he then decided to launch the war.[309]

And thus the captain took his men out on parade (f. 94) on the second day of the Christmas holidays, counting forty horsemen and five hundred and forty **Spanish** [LdeG: foot soldiers], eighty with crossbows **and** [LdeG: or] escopetas, although they had little gunpowder. Cortés divided the horsemen into four squadrons with ten men each and the foot soldiers into nine groups of sixty men each. He appointed captains and officers and spoke to them as follows:

Chapter 122. On Captain Cortés's Pronouncement to His Men

(My Brothers**),**

I give many thanks to Jesus Christ **our Lord and to Santa María, his Virgin Mother,** for seeing you healed of your wounds and free of illness **and hardship.** It pleases me to see you armed and anxious to return to Mexico to avenge the death of our **brothers and** companions and regain that great city. I hope to God you will do so shortly, since Tlaxcala and other provinces are on our side, given who you are and who the enemies are known to be, and the Christian religion we are spreading. **You already know, my friends and brothers, that as noble and faithful men** the Tlaxcalteca have always followed **and helped** us. They are armed and ready for this war, with as much desire to vanquish and subject the Mexica as we have, since not only their honor but their lives and liberty depend on it. If we do not defeat them, the Tlaxcalteca will be lost and enslaved, as the Colhuaque hate them more than they hate us for having welcomed us in their land. For this reason, they never abandon us but **constantly** make sure to serve and provide for us, even bringing their neighbors to our side. They have done this so prudently **and loyally** that **we have never heard or seen a nation like that of the Tlaxcalteca, for, if memory serves me,** they have kept their promise.

I confirm to you that they have one hundred thousand men ready for war to send to us and a large number of tamemes to bring food,

309. [LdeG: Through his embassies, Quauhtemoc turned the Indians against the Spaniards; some sent him help, others took up arms, and yet many others paid no attention. They either harassed our men and those of Tlaxcala or remained quiet due to their fear, Cortés's reputation, or the hatred they felt for the Mexica. Upon seeing this, Cortés decided to begin the war and his journey to Mexico (Tenochtitlan) before the allies and Spaniards who followed lost their resolve. With the success of the war against Tepeaca and the other provinces, the Spaniards no longer remembered the islands. Such is the power of good fortune.]

artillery, and supplies. You men are the same as you have always been, and with me as your captain you have won many battles fighting against one hundred and two hundred thousand enemies, and even more. You have taken by force many well-built cities and subjugated great provinces with fewer men, for when we first entered this land we did not number as many as we do now, thanks to our friends. And even if we no longer had them, you are such that without them you would still conquer all this land, so long as God gives you health. For at the least danger, **you** Spaniards dare to fight for your glory and vanquish as is your custom.

Your enemies are no more numerous or better than before, as was demonstrated at Tepeaca, Quauhquechollan, Itzocan, and Xalatzinco, although they have another lord (f. 94v) or captain who, try as he might, has failed to take the parts and towns of this land that are ours. Instead, in Mexico he fears our departure and our fortune, for all his men believe we will be the lords of the great city of Tenochtitlan. We will be held accountable for the death of our great friend Moteuczoma if Quauhtemoc keeps the kingdom. Everything we strive for will be in vain if we do not take Mexico, and our victories hollow if we do not avenge our companions and friends. But our principal reason for coming to these parts is to exalt and proclaim the faith of Christ, although it is true that honor and benefits often follow, but they seldom mix.[310] **You know that** we have demolished the idols and stopped the sacrifice and eating of men, and that during the few days we were in Mexico, we began to convert Indians to our religion. There is no reason to leave such good work unfinished, so we will go where our faith and the sins of our enemies—who deserve whipping and punishment—call us.

You will remember that the people of Mexico Tenochtitlan, not content to kill and sacrifice innumerable men, women, and children before their statues to honor their gods **(**or better, devils**)**, eat them after they are sacrificed, an inhuman act that all good men **(**especially Christians**)**, as well as God, abhor, forbid, and punish. Moreover, they commit without any shame or sorrow that damnable sin for which were burned and razed Sodom and the five cities. What greater reward does anyone here on earth wish but to uproot these evils and plant the faith among these cruel men by spreading the Holy Gospel? Let us go and serve God, honor our nation, praise our king, and enrich ourselves, because Mexico is **everyone's** enterprise. Tomorrow, with God's help, we will begin.

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310. LdeG uses the Spanish saying, *que pocas veces caben en un saco*, "they rarely fit in one sack."

All the Spaniards responded in unison with great happiness, for his words were most welcome, and they would not fail him. And they were so stirred that they wished to leave immediately, whether due to their nature or because they coveted the power and the riches they enjoyed in the city only eight months ago. **Captain** Cortés then made public the following regulations he had written in regard to the army's good government and order:

No one should blaspheme the Holy Name of God **or swear in vain;**

Spaniards should not fight with each other;

(f. 95) Weapons and horses should not be gambled;

Women should not be raped;

No one should take goods, capture Indians, or make incursions or plunder without Cortés's permission and the approval of the cabildo;

Indian warriors [LdeG: friends] and porters should not be insulted.

He set the fee for shoeing horses and for uniforms, given their excessive cost. **These were the orders he gave.**

[Chapter 123]. Cortés Addresses the Tlaxcalteca

The next day, Cortés called the lords, captains, and principales of Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, Cholola, Chalco, and other nearby towns. Through his interpreter **Malintzin (who was always there to help the captain),** he said:

My Lords and Friends,

You are familiar with the journey and course I am taking. Tomorrow, God willing, I must leave to take part in the war and siege of Mexico, entering through my and your enemies' land. I beseech you in everyone's presence to remain as true and constant in our friendship and agreement as you have until now, which I trust and herewith declare. I cannot finish this war according to my plans or your wishes so soon if I do not have the brigantines **(**which are being built here**)** in the lake of Mexico. I ask you to treat the Spaniards, whom I leave here building them, with your usual devotion, giving them all **the necessities** they request for themselves and their work. In return, I promise to lift the yoke of servitude placed by the Colhuaque from your shoulders and to ensure that the emperor grants you substantial favors.

All the Indians who were present signaled their **general** agreement. In few words the lords responded that they would not only do everything

he asked, but once the brigantines were built they would take them to Mexico and all march to war with him. **They added that they would provide the food. It was admirable that Cortés did not have to ask them repeatedly; rather, they could not wait to pack their belongings.**

[Chapter 124]. How Cortés Took Tetzcoco

Cortés left Tlaxcala with his Spaniards in good marching order on the feast of the Holy Innocents [December 28]. The army of more than eighty thousand men, most armed and adorned with brilliant plumes, was a sight to behold. However, he did not take the entire army with him, but left a number of his men there until the brigantines were built and Mexico surrounded. He also did not carry all the food, knowing how difficult it was to maintain so many men on the road and in enemy lands. Still, he took twenty thousand, plus those needed to fire the artillery and carry the food and supplies. That night he slept in Tezmoluca[311] at a distance of six leagues in the province of Huexotzinco, whose lords received him well. The next night, after traveling four leagues, he slept **in the forest now called Río Frío**[312] (f. 95v) **near the high, snow-capped mountain range.** If not for the abundant firewood, the Indians would have died from the cold, and even so, both they and the Spaniards suffered from it.

In the morning, Cortés ascended the pass, sending ahead four infantrymen and four horsemen to reconnoiter the terrain. They found the road strewn with recently felled trees, but thought that farther on it would be clear. In order to give a full report, they continued as far as they could, and then turned back to inform that the road was blocked by many thick pines, cypresses, and other trees that prevented their horses from passing. When Cortés asked if they had seen any people, he was told there were none, so he went ahead with all the horsemen and some foot soldiers, ordering one thousand Indians to follow and the rest of the army and artillery to hasten their march. The Indians removed the trees from the road, clearing the branches and trunks as the others approached, and freeing it so the horses and artillery could pass without any danger or harm, although with no little trouble to all. Indeed, had the enemies waited there for them, they would not have passed through, since many men and horses would have been lost, given the forest's density and ruggedness. However, not thinking that our army would follow

311. Texmelucan in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 243, which Gerhard, *Guide*, 141–42, shows to be a part of Huexotzinco.

312. Gerhard, *Guide*, 76; apparently the headwaters of the Río Atoyac.

this route, the enemies were satisfied with blocking it and taking position on the flatter roads. Of the three leading from Tlaxcala to Mexico, Cortés took the roughest one, either guessing what actually happened or being told that his enemies were not there.

After breaching the pass, they sighted the lakes, whereupon they gave thanks to God, promising to never turn back without having won Mexico or lose their lives in the process. They stopped to rest a while before descending **all** together to the low plain, since the enemies were sending many smoke signals and starting to give yells and calls across the land. Planning to ambush the Spaniards between the two bridges, they summoned those guarding the other roads and sent out a large squadron. But Cortés dispatched twenty horsemen to spear and break their ranks. Others were killed by the rest of the Spaniards, who cleared the road and, uninjured, made it to Quauhtepec **or Coatepec,**[313] **which is on high ground and** within the jurisdiction of Tetzcoco, where they spent the night.

The town was empty, although there were more than one hundred thousand warriors and even more Colhuaque nearby who had been sent against our men by the lords of Mexico and Tetzcoco. Fearing an attack, Cortés organized a nightwatch with ten horsemen. He readied his men, placing them on alert, but the opponents kept quiet that night. The next morning, he departed for Tetzcoco; before traveling the three leagues to the town, he was approached by four Indian principales from Tetzcoco carrying a small flag on a gold staff worth about four marcos as a sign of peace. They told Cortés that their lord **Coanacochcin**[314] had sent them to ask that he not cause any damage in their land and to offer themselves to him. He should go with his entire army to the city, where all would be well received and lodged. Pleased with the embassy but wary it might be a trick, Cortés greeted one man, whom he knew, (f. 96) and stated that he had not come to do evil but good. He would receive the lord and all of them as his friends, as long as they gave back what they had taken from forty-five Spaniards and three hundred Tlaxcalteca whom they had killed earlier and whose deaths he forgave **(**since nothing could be done now**).** Responding that Moteuczoma had had them killed and taken the spoils and that their town was not to blame, they turned and departed.

313. Ibid., 76–78; one of several states of the Acolhuaque (of Tetzcoco). Coatepec reportedly presented no resistance to the Spaniards.

314. [LdeG: Coacnacoyocin] (Coanacochtzin hereinafter). See *CC*, 2:39, who notes that he was installed as ruler of Tetzcoco in 3-House, 1521, and killed on the trip to Honduras. He was baptized before he died and became don Pedro de Alvarado Coanacochtzin. He ruled for four years.

Cortés and his men left well supplied for Coatlichan and Huaxutla,[315] which are on the outskirts of Tetzcoco. He brought down their idols, entered the city, and accommodated all the Spaniards and many of their friends in large houses. Suspicious that there were no women or children to be seen and thinking he might be betrayed, he armed himself and sent word that no one, under penalty of death, should go outside. At dusk, after distributing and furnishing their rooms, the Spaniards climbed to the rooftops to look at the city **(**which is as large as Mexico**)**. They saw the residents deserting it, some leaving with their bundles for the hills, others by water, and were astounded at the twenty thousand **canoes and** small boats bustling about, ferrying people and clothing. Cortés attempted to stop the exodus, but was forced to abandon his efforts when night fell. He tried to arrest the lord, but he had been the first to leave for Mexico. Summoning many of the people of Tetzcoco, he told them that don Fernando **Tecocoltzin**[316] was the son of Nezahualpiltzintli, their beloved lord. This made him their king, since Coanacochtzin had gone over to the enemy and wickedly killed Cocozca[317] his brother and lord, for he coveted the kingship and had been so persuaded by Quauhtemoctzin, the mortal enemy of the Spaniards. The people of Tetzcoco returned to see their new lord, soon populating the city as before; since the Spaniards did them no harm, they followed their orders. Don Fernando **de Alva**[318] was always a friend of the Spaniards. He learned our language and took the name given him by Cortés, who was his godfather at his baptism.[319]

A few days later the peoples of Coatlinchan, Huexotla, and Atenco[320] came to offer themselves, asking forgiveness for their errors. After he received and pardoned them, Cortés concluded by admonishing them to return to their houses with their wives, children, and property, as they had also taken to the hills or gone to Mexico. Quauhtemoc, Coanacochtzin,

315. Gerhard, *Guide*, 311–14, has Coatlinchan and Huexotla and states that they were two principal polities within Tetzcoco.

316. *CC*, 2:39, states that Tecocoltzin was the older brother of Coanacochtzin. He was installed as ruler after his brother died in Honduras. He ruled for one year and died in 7-House, 1525.

317. See above, note 257 (f. 73v).

318. Don Fernando de Alva (or Alvarado) is possibly the don Fernando Tecocoltzin mentioned above.

319. There are many instances of Cortés and his friars baptizing the natives both before and after the fall of Mexico Tenochtitlan. The convert would then receive the honorific *don*, a Christian given name, and a surname in addition to his indigenous name. Cortés also served as godfather for young native rulers on numerous occasions.

320. This is probably Chimalhuacan Atenco.

Tletepanquetzatl,[321] and the Colhua lords sent word that the three towns should be reprehended and punished for giving themselves to the Christians. They arrested and brought the messengers to Cortés, who learned from them what was occurring in Mexico. He returned them to their lords with a message of peace and friendship; however, it did little good since they were determined to wage war. At that time, some of Diego Velázquez's friends, aiming to destroy Cortés, came to rouse the men so they would mutiny and return to Cuba. Learning of it, [Cortés] arrested and interrogated them. On their confession, he condemned to death Antonio de Villafaña[322] from Zamora for spearheading the mutiny, which ended with his execution.

[Chapter 125]. The Battle of Iztacpalapan

Cortés remained eight days in Tetzcoco, reinforcing and supplying the house he occupied in case the enemies besieged the city, which was too large to fortify entirely. When the enemies did not attack, he took fifteen horsemen (f. 96v) and two hundred Spaniards with ten escopetas, thirty crossbows, and about five thousand friends to the edge of the lake near Iztacpalapan, a distance of five direct leagues **from Tetzcoco.** When the people of Tetzcoco were warned by the Colhua garrison with smoke signals from the watchtowers that the Spaniards planned to attack, they safeguarded their wives, children, and clothing in houses on the water. Sending a great fleet of acalles, many came out in squadrons two leagues from the town, well armed in their fashion. They did not fight there but returned skirmishing to the town, thinking they would draw in and kill the Spaniards. This was what the Spaniards wanted: they swung around, reentered the town, and fought so hard they pushed the natives into the water, where many drowned. Yet since they are good swimmers and the water reached only to their chests, and there were many boats besides those that rescued them, not as many died as was thought. Still, the Tlaxcalteca killed more than six thousand, and if night had not fallen, they would have killed even more.

The Spaniards took the spoils, burned many houses, and looked for lodging. However, although it was already late at night, Cortés ordered them to leave the city as soon as possible so they would not drown. The

321. Tetlepanquetzatzin. *CC*, 2:37–39, states that he was ruler of Tlacopan and walked on Moteuczoma's right side when they went to meet Cortés in 1519. He was later hanged along with Quauhtemoc on the trip to Honduras.

322. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 254, adds that Villafaña was a strong supporter of Velázquez, who allegedly instigated a conspiracy to overthrow Cortés. He was hanged for it.

townspeople had broken the causeway and the rising waters were already flooding everything. If they had stayed the night, not one man in his company would have been saved; although they evacuated in great haste, it took them until nine at night. In their rush through the water, they lost all the spoils and several Tlaxcalteca drowned. After the ordeal, they were left cold, wet, and hungry, since they had not salvaged any food. Knowing what had occurred, the Mexica wasted no time attacking in the morning. Forced to march to Tetzcoco, the Spaniards fought with those assailing them on land and others assaulting them from the water. They could not harm the latter, since they would then seek refuge in boats, or the former, because they numbered so many. Despite their troubles and hunger, they managed to reach Tetzcoco, although not without incurring the deaths of many of our Indian friends and one Spaniard **(**who I believe was the first to die **fighting** in the field**).**

Cortés was saddened that night, thinking that the journey had encouraged their enemies and frightened others who would not wish to offer themselves to him. But the next morning messengers from Otumba—where Cortés's celebrated battle had taken place, as mentioned above—and from **another** four cities that were **six** [LdeG: five] leagues distance from Tetzcoco, came to beg forgiveness for past wars and offer their services. They requested that he protect them from the people of Colhua, who were threatening and mistreating them, as they did all who offered themselves to the Spaniards. Although Cortés praised and thanked them, he responded that if they did not bring the messengers from Mexico tied up, he would neither forgive nor receive them. After this, those from Otumba informed Cortés that the men from Chalco province wished to be his friends, and they came to offer themselves to him, but the Colhua garrison that was on their land would not let them. Cortés sent Gonzalo de Sandoval with twenty horses and two hundred Spanish infantrymen to overtake the men from Chalco and throw out the Colhuaque. (f. 97) He also sent letters to the Spaniards in Veracruz stating that, as the enemies had the road blocked, he had received no news of them in a long time.

Sandoval left with his company; first, to protect Cortés's letters and messengers and to accompany the many Tlaxcalteca safely to their houses with the clothing they had won, and then to join the men from Chalco. On separating from them, however, the enemy attacked, killing some and stealing a large part of the spoils. As soon as Sandoval learned of this, he hurried back, pursued the opponents, and repaired much of the damage. They were thus able to leave for Tlaxcala and Veracruz; **on their return,** they joined the men from Chalco, who knew they were on their way **with Spaniards** and were waiting for them **(**and the

Colhuaque[323] were armed**).** They attacked the Colhuaque, who fought long and hard, but in the end were defeated; their men were killed, their ranches burned and plundered. Nevertheless, Sandoval returned to Tetzcoco with the sons of the Chalco lord, bringing Cortés about four hundred pesos in gold pieces. Crying, [the sons] asked Cortés to forgive them, saying that on his deathbed their father had ordered them to submit to [Cortés]. He consoled them, appreciating their wish, confirming the office **granted by their ancestors,** and giving Sandoval to them as their escort home **with their noblemen.**

[Chapter 126]. The Spaniards Sacrificed at Tetzcoco

Cortés regained his strength and reputation, drawing to his side all the people [LdeG: not] belonging to the Colhua faction and many who did. Two days after don Fernando **Tecocoltzin** was named lord of Tetzcoco, the lords of Huexotla and Coatlinchan came to tell him that the full force of the Mexica was upon them, and they were so frightened that they asked whether they should take their children and possessions to the mountains or bring them to where he was. Cortés **encouraged them and** gave them heart, asking that they remain quietly in their houses. They should not be afraid but take care to prepare themselves and appoint spies, since he would take care of their enemies. Once the spies notified him, they would see how he punished them. The enemies did not go to Huexotla as everyone thought but instead confronted the tamemes of Tlaxcala, who were busy supplying the Spaniards. Cortés met them with two pieces of artillery, twelve horsemen, two hundred infantry, and many Tlaxcalteca. He fought but killed few because they took shelter in the water, burned several towns where the Mexica gathered, and returned to Tetzcoco.

The next day the three most important towns in the region, **which were Chimalhuacan, Cuitlahuac, and Chicualoapan,**[324] came to Cortés to ask his forgiveness. They begged him not to destroy them, as they would no longer shelter any Colhuaque. Because of this embassy, the Mexica punished them harshly, and many of the injured appeared

323. C. mistakenly states that it was the Colhuaque, rather than the Chalca, who were armed.

324. Gerhard, *Guide*, 76, 103, states that Chimalhuacan Atenco and Chicoloapan were subject to Tetzcoco and that the former was the only one with a tlatoani. He adds that Chicoloapan "belonged to neighboring Coatlinchan." Cuitlahuac is more traditionally thought to be closer to Lake Chalco and is included in the *chinampa*, "raised aquatic field," zone.

before Cortés so he could avenge them. The men from Chalco also asked his help to fight off the Mexica; (f. 97v) since he wanted to send for the brigantines and could not afford to lose any Spaniards, he sent men from Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, Cholola, Quauhquechollan, and other friends **to assist them**, [LdeG: giving them hope that he himself would soon join them]. No one in the provinces was happy to be without the Spaniards, however, and they wrote letters requesting any sort of help. At that moment, messengers came from Tlaxcala to Cortés with the news that the brigantines were ready and asked whether he needed people, **for they would notify them by courier so they could come join the war. The captain should know that** there was much smoke across the countryside signaling the beginning of **preparation for major** wars **on the part of the Mexica.**

Cortés then sent the messengers with the Chalca to say on his behalf to the lords and captains of Chalco that he would be very pleased if they forgot the past, became his friends, and helped him against the Mexica. From then on they were his **loyal** [LdeG: good] friends, and each helped one another. At the same time, a Spanish **messenger came** from Veracruz to inform him that more than thirty Spaniards, not counting sailors, with eight horses had **landed and** disembarked from a ship. They brought much gunpowder, crossbows, and escopetas, which delighted **the Spaniards. Captain** Cortés sent **Captain** Sandoval, along with two hundred Spaniards and fifteen horsemen, to Tlaxcala for the brigantines, ordering him to destroy the road where the three hundred Tlaxcalteca and forty-five Spaniards with five horse[men] had been captured when they were besieged in Mexico. This town [LdeG: belongs to Tetzcoco], borders Tlaxcala, **and is called Calpolalpan.**[325] Although Cortés wanted to punish the lords of Tetzcoco for this same reason, **he did not dare to nor** was the time right, for the others deserved greater punishment. They had sacrificed our people **to their gods,** and **even** eaten them **at their banquets,** spilling their blood on the walls **of the temples** and making with it signs **and ceremonies** that indicated it was that of the Spaniards. **Not only had they done all this,** they had even skinned the horses, [LdeG: tanned their hides without removing the hair], **stuffed them with straw,** and hung them **for show** [LdeG: with their horseshoes] in the Templo Mayor, and next to them, as mementos, the garments of the Spaniards.

Captain Sandoval was ready to fight and raze the place, as Cortés had ordered, because before he arrived he had seen written in coal **on a large house** the words, "The luckless Juan Juste was imprisoned here."

325. Ibid., 312, states that Calpolalpan was on the eastern edge of Tetzcoco.

An hidalgo, Juste[326] was one of the five horsemen [mentioned above]. **(**Although they were many**),** on seeing the Spaniards upon them, the people from Calpolalpan left and fled **into the forests**. The Spaniards pursued them, but most were women and children **who gave themselves as slaves in exchange for their husbands.**[327] On hearing the fathers' cries for their children, Sandoval felt great compassion (f. 98) and did not kill **any of** them or destroy their town. Instead, **Sandoval and the other Spaniards** summoned the men and gave them a **general** pardon, accepting from them an oath that they would serve loyally **in all future wars.** In this way, the deaths of the forty-five Spaniards were avenged.

When they were asked, "How did you capture so many Christians without any defending himself or escaping?" they responded that they had positioned themselves in ambush at a dangerous pass where the road narrowed, and attacked from the rear. As the Spaniards were climbing one by one, with their horses at their side, and could not join together and fight with their swords, the natives quickly captured and sent them to Tetzcoco, where **(**as I said above**)** they were sacrificed to avenge the imprisonment of **King** Cacama**tzin, who had been so lamented by his brothers, sons of their former King Nezahualpiltzintli.**

Chapter 127. How the Brigantines Were Brought to Tetzcoco by the Tlaxcalteca

Once the natives who had captured the Spaniards were subjugated and punished, **Captain** Sandoval left Tlaxcala. At the province's border, he encountered eight thousand natives hauling the brigantines, along with planking and loads of nails. They were guarded by twenty thousand native soldiers and another [LdeG: two] thousand **carrying** food for all. The Spanish carpenters told Sandoval that, since he was entering enemy territory and did not know what might happen, he should position the futtock [LdeG: in front] and the planking at the rear, as the latter was heavier and gave better protection. All agreed that this was good **advice** and should be followed. **A noble principal, captain of the Tlaxcalteca and powerful lord called Chichimecateuhctli,**[328] was at the front in charge

326. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 257, states that a Juan de Yuste was captured by the Mexica and died in their prison, where he wrote the message on the wall of his cell.

327. C. changes the sense of the sentence by claiming that the women and children gave themselves in slavery in exchange for their men, while LdeG states that women cried for their husbands and the children for their fathers.

328. [LdeG: Chichimecatetl]. On some occasions, such as when Chimalpahin is referring to his own Amecameca, in certain altepetl the principal ruler was invested with the title of

of the planks. A brave man who commanded ten thousand men, he was told to take the rear of the army. Affronted and confused by the order, he retorted that it was an insult to his honor to be placed at the rear, with other similar statements that astonished Captain Sandoval. **To placate him, he was finally allowed to keep his honorable post at the front and two minor captains were posted at the rear.**[329] **The two, called Teutopil and Teutecatl,**[330] **were brothers from the same womb and courageous.**

Other captains, lords who were also principales, took the vanguard with another ten thousand men. **The army was placed at the center,** along with the tamemes carrying the brigantines' planking and rigging. In front of the two captains marched one hundred Spaniards and eight horsemen **with their banner**. Behind all of them came **Captain** Sandoval with other Spaniards and **another** seven horses. **If the Chichimecateuctli was angry before,** he was even more so **at this point** because he did not wish to be positioned alongside the Spaniards. He complained **that Lord Sandoval had no reason to throw him in with them because after he served Lord Cortés he had never remained behind but had always been in the lead in the wars and battles** (f. 98v) **he waged against the Mexica and other nations. Lord Sandoval knew this well, and since the lords of Tlaxcala and other friends had elected him captain of Tlaxcala, he should take note of what he deserved and not take away his command. He was an honorable man who would give an exact accounting of his charge and was offended by not being acknowledged, for it was a great insult and dishonor to his homeland** that he was not trusted or considered a loyal noble. **At last, Captain Sandoval ruled that he stay always at the front as their field scout.**

With the squadrons arranged in this manner, they marched to Tetzcoco. **In the lead was the valiant Tlaxcalteca Chichimecteuctli, who began making much noise, jeering, signaling, and rallying his squadrons** with cries of "Come along, Christians, Christians; Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala; Spain, Spain!" During the four days it took them to reach Tetzcoco, the natives kept their ranks well coordinated and in order with the beat of many **tambours and** drums and other instruments on which they play their music. They dressed **elegantly in white garments** with mantas

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Chichimecateuctli. In this instance it is used as the personal name of a ruler in Tlaxcala. The correct or full name of this individual is unknown. See Gibson, *Tlaxcala*, 24–25, who states that Chichimecateuctli distinguished himself in the battle for Mexico Tenochtitlan and was amply rewarded by Cortés.

329. C. favors cultural practice over historical narrative here, as LdeG states that the Chichimecateuctli ended up at the rear with Teutopil and Teutecatl in the vanguard.

330. Ibid., 93, mentions a "Teuhtlipil" as an individual who may have succeeded to office in Tizatlan after the death of Axayacatl Xicotencatl.

painted as they accustom and wearing feather headdresses. It was certainly a sight to see their entry that day into the city, which lasted over six hours with no break in formation or file, as they say, since they were a splendid people.

After marching for two leagues on the road, **the good Captain** Cortés came to greet them **outside the city, very happy to see his friends and Spaniards, and especially the brigantines' wood and planking, so eager was he to end the war against the obstinate Mexica. When the army arrived,** he gave many thanks to **God and to** the lords **and captains, first to the Chichimecateuctli, who was so pleased that he embraced Captain Cortés and kissed his hand. As he knelt before him, Cortés thanked him and lifted him to his feet by the hand.** Cortés then housed his Spaniards, **leaving his guards, friends, and other nations together. He housed them all in different quarters around the city chosen for this purpose. In the past Tetzcoco was the court and monarchy of the kings and lords who governed there, who, as their first deed, built great fortresses and palaces worthy of lords.**

Chapter 128. On Cortés's First View of Mexico in the Company of Friends and Three Hundred Spaniards

The **Tlaxcalteca** rested **several** days **until the brigantines were assembled, and in the meantime** Cortés ordered the assembling and nailing to proceed in all haste. He had his men dig a **wide** channel so **the brigantines** could be launched onto the lake without any **one** of them coming apart. Since **he saw that his soldiers were idle** [LdeG: the Spaniards were eager to fight the Mexica], he decided to fight **in the meantime** with **twenty-five horsemen, five** [LdeG: six] cannons, and three hundred Spaniards, among whom were fifty escopeteros and crossbowmen, and other armed men, **and all took the road to Mexico.** (f. 99) After **they had traveled four** leagues, a squadron of **Mexica** enemies **who were spying on them attacked them on a plain called Tecamma.**[331] Cortés skirmished with them **there,** breaking their ranks with his horsemen; **many were dispersed or killed and the rest fled to marshy lakes where the horsemen stopped.**

The foot soldiers arrived **after the horses quieted down; nevertheless,** the Tlaxcalteca gave chase to the enemy **and killed many who had not fled. They sacked the town, seizing many women who were later sent to their province as slaves. When Cortés learned of it, he called the lords and captains to tell them they should not take women as slaves, for their**

331. Gerhard, *Guide*, 226, has a Tecama as a *sujeto*, "subject town," of Tlatelolco.

plunder sufficed. He had not come to offend the natives but to deliver all these nations from their servitude. Upon hearing their captain general's entreaty, the Tlaxcalteca captain sent the women back to their homes. Seeing they were among enemies, and since it was almost dark, the men carefully and cautiously set up camp. In the morning, they took the road to Xaltocan,[332] [an island] in the lake with many broad, deep canals, impassable for horses. Cortés did not say where he was headed, since he suspected that many of the Tetzcoca who came with him might tell his enemies.

Since the townspeople **were in the middle of the lake and surrounded by water, they came out within sight of our men and** mocked them by screaming and yelling, **as the Spaniards encircled them, unable to reach them or find an approach, for there was no way across. In the end, the friends made their approach any way they could, some swimming and others, in great danger, jumping across the raised fields,[333] as the enemies fought back with their weapons, arrows, and slingshots. The Tlaxcalteca killed some who retreated to their town. In the meantime,** the Spaniards found a way **through the canals. Seeing that they had crossed** [to the island], their opponents attacked them with slingshots and arrows, **forcing the Spanish foot soldiers to jump as if they were dancing to music, making them laugh. Ultimately,** [the Spaniards] fought their way into the town with great effort, driving the residents out in hand-to-hand combat. They burned a good number of the houses, **mainly the largest, which the Mexica lords used to accommodate their armies.**

Cortés did not **want to** stop there, so they spent the night one league beyond Xaltocan, **where they found a house with a frog over the doorway** as its arms, **emblem, or insignia. It was in fact not a frog but a spider or tarantula, called *tocatl* in the Mexican language, and since *xal* means "sand," they call the town Xaltocan.**[334] They slept **and spent the night** in a large town called **Cuauhtitlan** [LdeG: Huatullan],[335] which

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332. [LdeG: and Cortés did not say where they were going, for he feared that the people of Tetzcoco, many of whom accompanied him, might put his enemies on the alert. They arrived at Xaltocan]. Gerhard, *Guide*, 127, locates Xaltocan north of Mexico Tenochtitlan and east of Cuauhtitlan. Gibson, *Aztecs*, 4, 25, states that it was once an Otomi center but was taken over by Nahuatl speakers. Xaltocan was closely allied with the Mexica against the Spaniards.

333. C. uses *camellones* in reference to the raised aquatic fields called *chinampas* in Nahuatl.

334. Chimalpahin is incorrect about the meaning of the word Xaltocan. Tocatl cannot be spider because in *xal-*, "sand," *to-*, and *-can*, "where," *-to-* is the [t] auxiliary ligature, and [o] is the auxiliary form of the verb *onoc*, "to lie," rendering "where the sand lies." Again, our thanks to James Lockhart for his assistance with the Nahuatl meaning of this term.

335. C. corrects LdeG here.

its native population had abandoned out of fear. **They stayed there until the next day, crossed a hill called Tenayocan, and on their descent came upon a river with little water and then went directly to Azcapotzalco.**[336] Without encountering any resistance, they came to Tlacopan, which was full of **garrison** soldiers and surrounded (f. 99v) by moats and much water. Although [the people of Azcapotzalco] defended themselves, **they did not stop** our men **from** entering **with great force,** killing many and driving them out. **After they fled** and night fell, the Spaniards slept there in a great palace **that accommodated the entire army. They were on their guard and alert, so the Mexica would not make a devastating advance.** Before dawn **the following day,** they looted **the royal houses that belonged to the town's former rulers but found little gold or featherwork because the inhabitants had hidden it all. The Tlaxcalteca friends came to** set the houses on fire as payment for the damage they had inflicted on the Spaniards when they fled Mexico **on that dark night.**

Cortés and his Spaniards stayed there for six days, during which they fought their enemies, who attacked so suddenly and gave such shouts that it frightened our people. **The Tlaxcalteca friends resisted them valiantly, showering them with so many arrows that many died, while very few on our side were wounded. At times**, they fought so furiously hand to hand that our people had to notice the marvels and exploits of the Tlaxcalteca **and the Tlacopaneca.** It was worth seeing **their** [LdeG: the enemies'] courage when they exchanged so many threatening and insulting messages and arguments, such that whoever heard them died laughing. Sometimes they called out challenges to each other, coming in one by one or in groups to fight hand to hand. **Other times, they fought with clubs made of oak edged with sharp rocks or flint in such a way that with one swing they severed hands or legs, cut heads open, or left their opponents dead at their feet. Even when one warrior killed his enemy, he continued to struggle with another. If the victor, he decapitated the vanquished and brought his main lord or captain the head so he could be elevated to the nobility. He was made lord of a town or appointed captain of a company if he brought in three or four heads.**

In the interim, [the enemies] would come out of Mexico along the causeway, taunting [LdeG: them to fight. And in order to capture] the Spaniards **with threats so they would pursue them.** They pretended to turn back **to Mexico so the Christians would find themselves surrounded and ambushed if they gave chase.** Other times, they welcomed

336. [LdeG: They passed through Tenayocan and Azcapotzalco]. Gerhard, *Guide*, 247–48, states that, in preimperial times, Azcapotzalco was once the capital of the Tepaneca. It was located west of Mexico Tenochtitlan with Tlacopan (Tacuba) as its capital under Mexica hegemony.

them to the city, saying, "Come in and enjoy yourselves, men, **for you will have your fill of the precious riches we possess; you will return as rich men to your lands.**" Others **ground their teeth and** said **angrily, "Come in, you who are our enemies, for all of** you will die here, as **your friends did** before." Yet others **exclaimed,** "Go back to your lands, for **now** there is no Moteuczoma who **obeys your will and** favors you, **for he is no more."**

One day, as these exchanges took place, Cortés came to a raised drawbridge and indicated with hand signals **that he wished to speak with them and their lord to negotiate peace.** (f. 100) They responded **haughtily,** "All these people whom you see **together** before you are lords; state what you wish." **Observing their arrogant manner, Cortés** did not wish to speak with them **again. They shouted a thousand insults at him, but he did not understand them and returned to his men, and** they **once again proffered a thousand affronts to** dishonor him. Then, a **valiant** Spaniard **who was there** told them, "Be aware, you enemies, that you will die of hunger, for you are surrounded. **Let there be no more talking, for we will have our captain stop the hostilities if you** submit." They replied loudly that they did not want for bread, **for they had much more than what they needed** [LdeG: and that, when they did want for it, they would eat any Spaniard or Tlaxcalteca they killed]. **The enemies also said that we were the hungry ones, so much that we would eat our own fathers alive** [LdeG: we would eat Spaniards and the Tlaxcalteca we killed] **and added that we would see they had plenty of bread, so much that they would give us some of it so we would go back to our land. (**They **took I do not know what sort of tortillas and** threw [LdeG: some kind of centli cakes] **some bread rolls they eat called tamales at us,** stating**),** "**Take this and** eat it if you are hungry, **for we are full and have too much of it. Come here if you wish, for we will graciously satisfy your hunger,** for we have little hunger, thanks to our gods. **What we most wish is that you** return to your lands. If you do not, you will die **by our hand. We will invite our people to feast on your flesh, for you are good to eat."**

After the threats, they began to scream **and howl, startling everyone. Those days, they fought fiercely for many hours. The horsemen skirmished with them, but even if a few fell after being speared, others took their place, and neither side relented until both were thoroughly exhausted. After they rested, the Spaniards returned to battle, but the enemies took flight, abandoning their small camp. Sounding the bugle, Cortés summoned his scattered men to regroup. Bless God, few were wounded and no one was killed. However, our friends were tired, and some were dead. Cortés was angry that the Tlacopaneca and Mexica**

did not want peace or friendship and that King Quauhtemoctzin never once came out to fight. Instead, Quauhtemoctzin remained in Mexico and from there sent his people against the Spaniards. [LdeG: Since he could not speak with Quauhtemoctzin and because all the towns had been deserted], Cortés had to return to Tetzcoco **to repair the brigantines,** taking the same road as before**.** The enemies who saw him thought he was leaving out of cowardice**.** Innumerable Indians then gathered to give chase**,** always attacking **their rear guard, but never harmed them in any way.**

Cortés wanted to punish their **boldness** [LdeG: madness] by sending all his men, including Spanish foot soldiers along with five horsemen. He prepared an ambush by placing six horsemen on one side of the road, five on the other, and three elsewhere, and he hid with the rest of his men behind several trees. Given that the enemies did not see any horses, they charged our squadron **frantically,** and Cortés went at them, yelling as he approached, "Santiago! At them! **Help us,** San Pedro! At them!" This signaled the horsemen to attack, and as they came upon the opponents from the side and back, they **boldly** speared them, **leaving many bodies lying on the ground.** After dispersing them with their first blows, (f. 100v) the Spaniards gave chase for almost two leagues on a plain **that led to the town of Tlalnepantla,**[337] killing infinite numbers **during this maneuver, and thus Cortés took his revenge.** With this victory, they **triumphantly** entered Acolman **(**which is two leagues from Tetzcoco**). The Tlacopaneca and Mexica** were left so chastised **and affronted** by the ambush that they did not **dare** return for many days.

Cortés rested in Acolman two days, although his army was already resting in Tetzcoco. He later went to camp and found his friends content with their victory. As soon as he arrived, the Tlaxcalteca requested permission to go back to their land **and recover their strength before returning.** They were boastful and victorious and had much wealth **from their looting,** as well as many loads of salt and clothing obtained in battle. **Cortés gladly granted their request, and they went with God. Before their departure, Cortés gave the Tlaxcalteca captains some advice. He had Malintzin tell the Chichimecateuctli captain that he should not grow lazy now that he was returning to his homeland, that he had to fulfill his duties well, and that upon his arrival he should gather some courageous people, because few good men remained on guard; therefore, he should bring people so there would be enough men in case of need.**

337. Gibson, *Tlaxcala*, 16, 24, 40, has Tlalnepantla as part of the Tepaneca regime and located just north of Azcapotzalco.

Chapter 129. An Account of the War **Cortés Waged on the Province** of Yacapichtlan[338]

When the Mexica **and Colhuaque** saw that **all their** wars with the Spaniards ended badly, they **gave assistance to** [LdeG: attacked] the province of Chalco, a very important territory located on the way to Tlaxcala. **Some in Chalco still gave assistance to Mexico City, for in ancient times it had been conquered not only by the Mexica but by the Tetzcoca, who were the first to rule the land, which was so fertile that its harvest was given as tribute to Tetzcoco. After King Nezahualpiltzintli died, King Moteuczoma tyrannized Chalco. (But this did not last long) for the Spaniards came and seized it from him. The Mexica and Colhuaque who were left in the garrisons in Mexico's provinces went to Chalco, where they took position in some towns not yet on our side. These men guarded the road to Veracruz that passed Río Frío and the volcano. There they engaged in secret attacks, killing Tlaxcalteca, Chololteca, Huexotzinca, Quauhquecholteca, and other nations who were the Spaniards' friends. When the Chalca saw that these opponents were scattered across their province, they sent messengers to Captain Cortés to warn the peoples of Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, and Quauhquechollan, since Cortés had previously enjoined them to help and to look after the Chalca so they would not be harmed.**[339]

Cortés agreed to send three hundred Spaniards and fifteen horses **to cross the land** with Sandoval as their captain **(since Cortés always believed he was a loyal soldier).** He told Sandoval to take the road to Huaxtepec[340] **(**as planned **by Cortés),** (f. 101) where [the Chalca] **told** Cortés the **Colhuaque** garrison **for the entire region** was located. Before arriving **at a fountain held by the Colhuaque,** the Spaniards were received **and showered with many arrows and stones thrown by them.** However, since the Colhuaque did not withstand the horses' fury or being stabbed by knives **and spears,** they returned to their town, and our people followed them **into their houses,** killing an infinite number. The Spaniards also chased out the rest of the residents, who did not stay to fight because they had no women or possessions there to defend. **Finally,** the Spaniards located **lodging and** food for themselves and their

338. Gerhard, *Guide*, 94–95, notes that Yacapichtlan was a good-sized polity located on the south slope of Mt. Popocatepetl and west toward Quauhnahuac (Cuernavaca).

339. [LdeG: The Chalca requested assistance from the people of Huexotzinco and Quauhquechollan, and asked Cortés for Spaniards.]

340. Gerhard, *Guide*, 94–95, states that Huaxtepec was located in the modern state of Morelos. It was west of Mt. Popocatepetl and, along with Cuernavaca, had a Mexica garrison in the vicinity. Today it is known as Oaxtepec.

horses while their friends looted **the houses,** taking **all the** clothing **they found. Although they were distracted by this task, our people were not, and** when the mighty noise and yelling of the adversaries resounded in the town's streets and main square, they came out fighting. With their spears, the Spaniards **stood their ground and** drove them out once again, slaughtering them after giving chase for an entire league. Our men remained there two days, **and the enemies left alive dared not return home until they departed.**

The Spaniards then marched to the province of Yacapichtlan, where they came upon **Colhua garrison** soldiers. **Captain** Sandoval ordered that they be given a formal request for peace **and several warnings on three separate occasions,** but they would not hear of it **(**since they were in a high, well-protected place, surrounded **by boulders and brambles and** difficult to ascend, even for the horses**).** The Colhuaque defended themselves by **flinging rocks from above and** shooting arrows. They threatened **our friends** the Chalca **by stating, along with many other threats, "Traitors, at the least you will die here with your husbands the Spaniards, for you brought them to our land, which they did not know before." Since** our Indian friends **saw that [the Colhuaque] position was well defended, they** were not bold enough to charge, but **finally** the Spaniards strove to attack. Calling out "Santiago!" they rushed up the hill, **shielding themselves from the rocks and arrows hurled at them,** and **while some of our people were hurt, many more of our friends were harmed. With this show of courage,** they took the rival stronghold, and the Chalca **Indians made a disorderly entrance, mingling with our people and** inflicting so many casualties on the Colhua residents at the garrison that it seemed an act of butchery. Several of their adversaries fell off the boulders into a river, **[but] in the end the Spaniards called out in victory, for** few escaped, **and they did not return until our men were gone. From then on the valiant Colhuaque began to lose courage, because, as it is known, they were reluctant to remain in the land of these natives.** This is how the battle of Yacapichtlan gained renown; **while more than one hundred Chalca and some Tetzcoca died, not one of our men was lost.**

However, **the Spaniards** [LdeG: our men] thirsted **for water, as the climate was very warm. Yet the water that flowed** (f. 101v) **from the** [LdeG: because of the heat and the fighting, and because that] river was red with **the blood from the many bodies [of the men]** who **fell from the boulders,** and, **best of all,** there was no other source of water **in the land.**[341] **Therefore, Captain** Sandoval decided to **break camp and** return to Tetzcoco

341. C. adds, perhaps ironically, *y lo bueno era que*, "**best of all.**"

to report the victory and success in the campaign. The Mexica grieved upon learning the great loss of Yacapichtlan and Huaxtepec, **taking it as an omen of what occurred later, for these were some of the strongest towns with the most valiant Colhua men. Even though the Mexica king's heart grew heavy with sorrow, he instructed all nearby Colhuaque to come together immediately as** an army **to pursue the Spaniards and avenge the injuries the Chalca inflicted on Yacapichtlan and Huaxtepec by** going secretly to wage a **brutal** war before the Spaniards found out. **King Quauhtemoctzin's captain was so diligent that** they traveled to Chalco overnight, taking its residents by surprise **early in the morning** so that they were unable to **defend themselves or** receive help from the Spaniards. **Since the Chalca had just returned from Yacapichtlan, and were negligent, the Colhuaque cruelly slaughtered them; while only one town was destroyed, the others realized the situation they were in. Due to the butchery,** the towns quickly assembled and **went to assist the town of Chalco Atenco, where they** awaited the Mexica and fought spiritedly among themselves. **More than one thousand five hundred Mexica were killed, along with three hundred Chalca, who it is understood died in battle. The Colhuaque and Mexica were chastened by the defeat but did not lose their resolve. They were wounded, however, by the imprisonment of one of their uncles or cousins, a Colhua captain general called Chimalpopocatzin.**[342] **He was later killed in the battle for Mexico, because he had become a captain of the Tetzococa. Finally, those who survived returned to Mexico to report the battle's outcome.** [LdeG: The Chalca gathered, waited for battle, and emerged victorious with the assistance of their neighbors. They killed many Mexica and captured forty of them, including one of their captains. As they expelled the enemy from their lands, this victory was as significant as it was unanticipated.]

As soon as Sandoval **learned about the combat in Chalco province, he informed Captain Cortés and received permission to pursue the Mexica, which he did** with the same Spaniards who had come with him. **They** went quickly to Chalco, **but the Mexica had already returned to their homes by the time they arrived. Thus, he turned back with forty Mexica prisoners which he took after killing another forty in a confrontation along the road. This action cost Sandoval ten Spaniards, however, so Captain Cortés was sorry to have sent him. When Sandoval returned with his prisoners, Captain Cortés ordered that the Mexica all be garroted in revenge.** The road to Veracruz was now free and safe thanks

342. Thomas, *Conquest*, 408, notes a Chimalpopoca, son of Moteuczoma, who was taken prisoner by the Tlaxcalteca. He was killed along with his sister doña Ana during the Spaniards' retreat on Noche Triste.

to the victories of Captain Sandoval and the Chalca. **And at that time,** thirty Spaniards arrived at Tetzcoco from Cuba, bringing many **weapons,** escopetas, crossbows, much gunpowder, ammunition, and other items from Spain, which our army received joyfully, given its need. **A courier soon came from Veracruz with news that** three more ships with men, horses, **ammunition, and harquebuses** had arrived.

(f. 102) **Chapter 130.** The Dangers to Our People on Taking Two Peaks, **and What Happened Next**

While Captain Cortés **was in Tetzcoco seeing to it that the brigantines were readied without delay, he** questioned the forty Mexica brought by **Captain** Sandoval about events in Mexico and about King Quauhtemoc**tzin and his plans. They responded that either the king had sought to join the lord of Tlacopan, called Tetlepanquetzatzin, and the allies to the north, or he had summoned all the captains and lords of the towns of those parts, and also that the Mexica were taking many precautions for their city. The king granted many gifts as favors to foreign lords and had stored sufficient food for two years. The city was protected by a very wide trench, with the drawbridges removed in case the Spaniards attempted to conquer it, and by another thousand inventions. Each day he passed review of his army, formed of many peoples. It was so large that their number could not be counted, with many machines**[343] **and supplies of weapons such as bows, arrows, clubs, lances, round shields, sacks of thick cotton, and another thousand types of weapons. They were on alert and assigned their captainships to the best men in the land.**

Captain Cortés and his Spaniards marveled at the news, although his men were not a little afraid to hear it, but he encouraged them. Once he understood that the Mexica were defending themselves and had not befriended the Christians—and as the war seemed long and difficult—he wished more for peace than war with them, **and it was** because he **was tired of marching and** wished to rest without experiencing danger every day. **Releasing them,** he beseeched the prisoners to go **safely** to Mexico to negotiate peace with King Quauhtemoctzin, since, even though he could do so, he did not wish to kill or destroy them. **When the prisoners heard this,** they responded **to Cortés** that they dare not take such a message, knowing the great enmity between him and their lord. **But Cortés importuned them so much that in the end two accepted.** They asked for

343. C.'s reference here to machines is not clear. Perhaps he had in mind a set of mechanical devices used in war.

letters **or other signs,** not because the king would understand them, **for the natives did not know letters,** but so that he would give them credit and assurances.

Cortés **wrote and** gave the letters to the two messengers with fifty horsemen who accompanied them **to the outskirts of Mexico. On arriving, they went before their lord** [Quauhtemoctzin] **and handed him the letters. He admonished the two messengers, not wishing to give anyone an answer. Instead, he became angry on seeing the papers, and said that he had no desire to see letters from men who came to take away his reign. He did not want peace but war and to avenge the insulting and murdering of his vassals. They should therefore leave his land, which he inherited from his ancestors, and instead go to Tlaxcala and the rest of the domain they had won. Since Quauhtemoctzin was absolute lord, Cortés should leave his kingdom and tend to his own dominion since he had spilled his blood to win it.** But this was of little use because **he did not wish to leave** [LdeG: there was no answer]. Rather, the more Cortés asked for peace, the more they rejected him, believing it was due to **their** [LdeG: his] weakness.

In order (f. 102v) to attack them at the rear, **the king** sent more than fifty thousand Indians to Chalco **province. When he did so,** the Chalca notified Cortés, requesting help **and his favor** from the Spaniards, and they sent him a cotton cloth painted with the towns and peoples who were about to attack them and the roads they were taking. Cortés sent word that **they should not worry, as** he would be there within ten days, but not before because of Good Friday and then his God's Easter. The Chalca were saddened by his response, since they had to wait until the third day of Easter, when other messengers arrived requesting help in great haste since the enemies had already entered their land. At this time, there came **several lords from** the towns of Acapan, Mexica[l]tzinco, Nauhtlan,[344] and others with their neighbors to submit to Cortés. They told **the captain that they presented themselves with their wives and children to the emperor don Carlos so they would be admitted under the royal crown. The captain did so, and they repeated that they had never been enemies of the Christians, much less killed one** [LdeG: a Spaniard].

They gave as presents **many cargas** [LdeG: clothing] of cotton and **mantas, as they had no gold.** He consoled them and sent them content to their lands, **ordering them to never admit any people from Mexico; thus, they left happily.** Since Cortés was about to depart for

344. Gerhard, *Guide*, has an Acapan in Tehuacan (southeastern Puebla) (262); a Mexicaltzinco as an isthmus between Lakes Texcoco and Xochimilco (178); and a Nauhtlan (Almería), as above, on the Gulf coast north of Veracruz (363).

Chalco **province to defend it from the Mexica,** he named as his captain Gonzalo de Sandoval and soon left with thirty horsemen, three hundred companions, and **close to** twenty thousand Tlaxcalteca and Tetzcoca friends. He slept at Tlalmanalco,[345] **the cabecera of Chalco and on the border with Mexico, where his men were received and well provisioned by order of the lords of the province. Before he arrived, two lords from the town came out to greet him; the first was named Omacatzin Teohuateuhctli,[346] whose Christian name was don Hernando de Guzmán, lord of the barrio of Opochhuacan Tlacochcalco. The second lord was called Tequanxayacatzin, whose Christian name was don Juan de Sandoval. He was also later called Teohuateuhctli, principal of the barrio of Tlailotlacan in the town of Amecameca. The latter sent as ambassador his brother don Tomás de San Martín Quetzalmaçatzin Chichimecateuhctli, lord of one of the five main barrios or cabeceras of the said town of Amecameca, called Itztlacoçauhcan. He came to receive Captain Cortés, guiding him from his town to the said town of Tlalmanalco,** where the Chalca garrison was stationed, as it was on the Mexica border.

From that day to the next, Cortés was joined by more than forty thousand natives, **whose great army pleased him very much.** The following day, he learned that the enemies awaited him on the field; **nevertheless, he and the Spaniards first** went to hear mass. Afterward, he marched **with the army, passing Amecameca,** until they reached a high peak, very difficult to climb.[347] At its pinnacle was **an infinite number of** women (f. 103) and children, **and at the base, many men armed with bows and round shields.** When our men were discovered, the enemies began to send smoke signals. The women gave such cries that it was astonishing, and the men who were down below began to throw **many** sticks **and shoot arrows,** harming those who drew near. **Many Spaniards were hurt,** and **at last** they retreated. **Although they thought it was cowardly to retreat, they could not attack the peak because it was well defended.** To demonstrate their courage and see if the enemies would surrender from fear and hunger, our men charged with much force in three different places. The first charge was led by Cristóbal de Corral,[348] lieutenant of seventy Spaniards from

345. Tlalmanalco was the northernmost altepetl in the Chalco confederation and in recent years had become the dominant polity.

346. Note C.'s signature spelling of *teuhctli*, "lord," which greatly facilitates identification of his writings.

347. Apparently they were near Tepetlixpan Chimalhuacan, a polity south of Amecameca but still part of the Chalco confederation.

348. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 30, says that Corral was a friend of Cortés's who played several critical roles during the expedition against the Mexica. He died in Castile before 1531.

Cortés's guard, who climbed the most **difficult and** arduous part. Juan Rodríguez de Villafuerte,[349] captain of fifty Spaniards, climbed another part, **although not as rugged;** and Francisco Verdugo,[350] with another fifty **soldiers,** climbed the third **part. All were well armed with good armor, harquebuses,** [LdeG: crossbows, escopetas,] **and their swords.**

Some time later, a bugle sounded; the first three men were followed by Andrés de Monjarás[351] and Martín de Irzio,[352] each with forty Spaniards, whom they also captained, and Cortés traveled with the rest. **Although** they circled the peak twice, they descended in shreds, unable to hold on with their hands or feet given the steep incline, and the more they struggled, the harder the climb. **Meanwhile, twelve** [LdeG: two] Spaniards **and many Indian friends who had moved forward** died, while others were injured by **pieces of** rocks hurled from above. Numerous pieces broke **and ricocheted in their fall on the road in front of the army, hitting and killing our men.** If the enemies had been clever, no Spaniard would have remained alive. When our men descended the peak, they grouped together to strengthen their position. **Since** so many Indians had come to assist the besieged natives, they covered the field, intending to fight. Cortés and the horsemen on foot **mounted their horses** and charged them on the plain. **Yelling "Santiago, at them!"** they drove them out **solely** with their spears. During the hour and a half that the battle lasted, they killed many **of the natives.**

The horsemen who pursued them spied another peak and, while not as high, fortified, **rugged,** or populated as the first, it had many towns at its base. Cortés and his men spent the night there, drinking some water, since he had not found any on the journey, and planning to regain the reputation he had lost during the day. **As was their custom,** the people on the crag made much noise with horns, drums, and shouts. In the morning, the Spaniards checked the peak's weakest and strongest areas. There was no good spot to be had, and all was difficult to fight and take, as there were two boulders nearby that sheltered armed natives. Cortés told all **his men** to follow him as he wished to examine **the two boulders.** They **began to** climb the mountain **range as fast as they could,** and the

349. Ibid., 115, Rodríguez de Villafuerte was also said to be a close friend of Cortés's and critical to the campaign. He founded the important colonial sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios (patron of the conquest) and married the granddaughter of Cacamatzin the elder of Tetzcoco.

350. Ibid., 252; Verdugo was said to have come to New Spain with Velázquez, but he proved invaluable to Cortés during the siege at Tenochtitlan.

351. Ibid., 90–91, Monjarás was active in combat as a friend of Cortés's; later they became estranged.

352. Ibid., 202–3, has Martín de Ircio (Dircio), who was described as a good soldier. He was generously rewarded by Cortés with three profitable encomiendas.

natives who guarded the crag fled **from the other side as** quickly **as they came,** thinking that the Spaniards would fight to protect it.

When Cortés saw the **enemies'** disarray, he sent a captain (f. 103v) with fifty companions to take the nearest and roughest boulder while he assaulted the peak. **In this way,** he won the skirmish and climbed **without any problems.** The captain planted the banner at the top of the peak and fired the escopetas and crossbows he carried, creating far more noise than damage. Astounded, the Indians threw down their weapons as a sign of submission and gave themselves to the captain. With a radiant countenance, Cortés ordered that they not be mistreated. Seeing so much humanity on the Spaniards' part, the Indians sent word to the others on the peak to give themselves to them, as they were good people. They made them believe that [the Spaniards] had wings to ascend wherever they wished. They told them this and other reasons, and either because they lacked water or because they wished to return safely to their homes, **on hearing the reasons, they decided to submit to Cortés and** beg pardon for killing the Spaniards **and the rest of the Tetzcoca and Tlaxcalteca friends. Cortés issued a general pardon, taking pity and not wishing them any harm because they had not given him any occasion to fight.** He was very pleased that these natives, who had won a victory, submitted themselves to him because with it he enhanced his **good** reputation.

Chapter 131. On Cortés's Battle to Conquer Xochimilco **and Its Towns**

Cortés did not remain long **in Chimalhuacan Chalco or on the peaks or in the towns. Before taking to the road,** he dispatched the wounded **and ill** to **the town of** Tetzcoco and left for Huaxtepec **toward Cuernavaca with his army, which was well organized and stocked with provisions and munitions. Before reaching Huaxtepec,** Cortés was told that the town was populated with many Colhuaque and people from the Mexica garrison. **He was amazed to learn that the Colhuaque had spread over all the provinces of the land, where they were greatly feared by all the nations of New Spain.** Cortés and his army slept in a **large** country house **that according to some served for the recreation of the Mexica kings.** It had an orchard **with a perimeter of almost one league and was** surrounded by **walls of** stone masonry**. A large river crosses through the middle of the property. Since the army arrived late, the Spaniards found no inhabitants early the next morning because** they had fled **into the forest with their belongings.**

Cortés **nevertheless** ordered several of his men to follow the Colhuaque to **a town called** Xomiltepec,[353] whose Indians were caught off guard by the assault. On entering **the town,** the Spaniards killed some **of those who resisted** and captured numerous women, children, and old people **who could not flee.** Cortés waited two days to see if the townspeople and their lord would come. Since they did not, he had the **entire** town burned. **When he learned that his people had imprisoned women and young men, he ordered that under penalty of death no soldier** [should take any] **woman or youth** [prisoner], **or he would punish them. The Spaniards released the prisoners and went into the town. While Cortés was busy with these matters, the lords and** people of Yauhtepec[354] (f. 104) came to pledge their obeisance, **pleasing him very much. He received them, and after he finished putting the towns in good order, he left Xomiltepec for Quauhnahuac (now called Cuernavaca).**

It was a sizable town, **well** fortified and surrounded by **large,** deep ravines with only two **narrow** entrances for horses which, if not for the drawbridges, would not allow them to pass. The road taken by our men did not have an entrance for horses, so they had to circle the town about a league and a half, a dangerous and laborious task. They were so close they could speak with the local **natives,** who threw rocks **and shot arrows at them.** Cortés sued for peace, but they responded that they **only** wanted war. As they spoke, a Tlaxcalteca **who knew a hidden road** crossed a ravine through a dangerous pass **without being noticed;** four Spaniards followed him and **then** many more after that. They entered and came to where Cortés was fighting the residents, and merely by brawling they forced them to flee, amazed to see that the Spaniards entered **in less time than it took to recite the Credo, for they believed they were well protected.** The majority escaped **or fled to the highest hills.**

When the army arrived, most of the town was burned; later **in the day,** the lord and **all** the principales offered themselves and their property to Cortés for his use against the Mexica. **Cortés soothed them with his warm words and friendship, requesting through his interpreter, whose name was Malintzin Tenepal, that they calm down and not riot. He, the captain, had not come to kill them or take their property, but to release them from the great taxes and labor obligations imposed on them as subjects of the Mexica empire. They should make note of and consider**

353. Xilotepec in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 258. Gerhard, *Guide*, has numerous Xilotepecs. It is also well known as the encomienda granted to Jaramillo by Cortés, 383–86. It is located north of Mexico City toward Tula (Hidalgo). We have not yet been able to locate a Xomiltepec.

354. Gerhard, *Guide*, 94–95. Yauhtepec is located in modern Morelos and is one of several important polities in the district of Cuernavaca.

the many men he brought with him to punish the rebel towns who did not listen to reason or his numerous addresses. The people of Cuernavaca were very pleased to hear Cortés and the good reasons that Marina gave them in his name.[355]

After three days, Cortés **and all his army** marched seven leagues toward **a large hill on the road to Mexico. He reached its summit, coming to** some ranches, **abandoned and** without water, **called Quauhmolco,**[356] **which was surrounded by dense forests. Since there was no water,** they suffered **much** that day, dying of thirst and hardship. The next day, **however,** they sighted **from a hilltop the city of** Xochimilco **and all the large towns as they descended until they reached said town, which is large** and on the freshwater lake. The residents and other peoples **already knew from our enemies that our men were coming to attack them, so they** lifted the drawbridges and breached the canals. In all, the residents and the Mexica defended themselves bravely, as they were numerous and thought the town protected (f. 104v) **because it had no access, with very deep canals.**

Gauging the town's ability to defend itself, Cortés organized the army. He **first** ordered the horsemen to dismount and then attempted to take the first barricade with some companions. He routed the townspeople with so many escopetas and crossbows that although numerous, they abandoned the town. **Some were killed;** many others were injured, and some Spaniards **threw themselves** in the water in retreat. The fight, which lasted for half an hour, ensured their taking the city's strongest and most important bridge. The natives who defended it retreated to **the canoes stationed in** the water, where they fought until nightfall. Some demanded peace and others war, and all was **deceit and** a trick to carry off their bundles of clothing **to the middle of the lake, which had reeds and sedges.** And they remained there awaiting help **from the Tenochca and Colhuaque,** who were some three or four leagues away [in Mexico], and **even more** because they wished to breach the causeway on which our men had entered.

Cortés was in doubt as to what action to take, for some asked for peace and others **war,** but he realized [it was a trick] and with his horses he assailed the men who were destroying the causeway. He scattered **and killed so** many **with his spear that others threw themselves into the canals.** Cortés pursued those who fled to the countryside, killing them with his spear, **leaving no man alive and the field strewn with dead.** However, many natives defended themselves with such bravery that they placed the

355. Note that C. uses both Malintzin and Marina in the same paragraph. The absence of doña before Marina is remarkable, considering Chimalpahin's great concern with titles.
356. We are unable to locate this site.

horsemen in difficulty. Some waited fearlessly for the horses with **clubs,** swords, [LdeG: and shields] in their hands. **The Indians thrust fiercely at them, splitting them open like pomegranates, frightening and keeping our men at a distance. They frequently fought with clubs edged with flint and carried shields against the Tlaxcalteca and Tetzcoca friends in the field, killing and leaving them dead here and there.** Captain Cortés's horse fell to the ground from exhaustion, and had it not been for a noble Tlaxcalteca **called Ocelotzin, who defended him ferociously,** he would have been taken captive. **Other companions finally came to the rescue, and the Tlaxcalteca killed more than six brave Mexica who tried to take Cortés. At last, they brought him a better horse. The Indian accompanied him, going ahead to make way until he reached the Spanish infantry and drove out the enemies.**

Cortés learned that in Mexico two insubordinate Spaniards had been killed for attempting a robbery. **Saddened by the news, he did not wish to continue in pursuit; instead, since it was late** he **sounded the bugle he carried with him and** assembled his men to rest and repair the broken causeway with the stones and adobes (f. 105) **that abounded there. The next morning the enemies were unable to breach the causeway a second time, since it had been repaired well with guards posted to prevent any more damage. The Xochimilca, alarmed by the thrashing they had received earlier, beseeched King Quauhtemoc to take pity on their lords and assist them by sending Mexica soldiers for protection against the Spaniards and other foreigners in their company.** Since **a courier** had informed the king of their need, he sent **by land** a battalion **of valiant soldiers from his great army** and **by water more than** two thousand **canoes** [LdeG: boats] **outfitted** with **more than** twelve thousand men. **The two groups left at the same time so they could surprise the Spaniards in an ambush and kill them as they had killed the enemy Mexica and Xochimilca.**

Captain Cortés, **who had been notified of their approach,** watched from a high tower the enemies' organization **and their battle against the city.** Marveling at the many people and boats that covered the land and water, he **gave orders to assemble the army and** divided the Spaniards into units for the guard and defense of the town and causeway. He attacked the enemies with the cavalry and six hundred Tlaxcalteca separated into three groups, telling them that if the squadron were to disperse **or its ranks** broken by the enemy, they should seek shelter on a hill he showed them that was one half a league away. The Mexica captains marched at the front brandishing [LdeG: iron] swords[357] **or clubs edged**

357. C. left out *de hierro*, "iron," although it appears that the natives have commandeered the Spaniards' swords at this point.

with flint and sharp stones resplendent as mirrors. As they approached, they arrogantly called, "Poor Spaniards, we will kill you here with your own weapons!" **Others cried, "Woe to you cowards, since there is no other Moteuczoma** [LdeG: has died] **to love and defend you. The regaling you enjoyed daily from him is over now,** and we no longer have anyone to fear **as our friends feared him"** [LdeG: so as not to eat you alive]. **Along with other insults, still others cried, "Wait, sons of the sun, for you will soon die by our hand,** and we will eat you alive, **grilled on a barbecue**[358] **and cooked, in morsels, as your flesh is tasty!"**

And as they threatened our men, so they threatened our Tlaxcalteca friends with many insults. [LdeG: Others threatened the Tlaxcalteca and finally, everyone called out many insults to our men.] And **thus** they called out to them **with great shouts and voices,** "Mexico! Mexico! Tenochtitlan! Tenochtitlan!" They marched rapidly, **and Cortés gave the signal to attack.** He **was the first to** go at them, **crying "Santiago! San Pedro!" He broke the enemy ranks** with his horses, the squadrons of the Tlaxcalteca, and other friends. Thrusting with his spear, he dispersed them, but they **soon** regrouped. When Cortés saw their number, good order, and courage, he again broke their ranks, killing some. Regrouping his army, he went to the hill **he had indicated.** However, as the enemy had already (f. 105v) taken it, he sent part of his troops to ascend the back of the hill while he went around it. The enemies at the summit fled from the men climbing the hill and ran into the horses, with more than five hundred trampled by their hooves. Resting for a moment, Cortés summoned one hundred Spaniards, who **loyally** came to fight a large Mexica squadron approaching from the rear, dispersing them. The Spaniards had retreated because of the **ferocious** attacks they received on land and by water. When the reinforcements arrived, the enemies withdrew. Fighting back, the Spaniards killed many opponents and recovered their swords, although they were **also** in danger because [LdeG: those Mexica captains were pursuing them, and because] they had run out of arrows and ammunition.

The Mexica **captains** had barely left when more natives rushed along the causeway, screaming at the top of their lungs. The Spaniards turned to face them, charging **spiritedly** despite their number **and ferocity. Although their aggressiveness and daring were frightening, for they were enraged, our men confronted them valiantly. At full charge,** the horsemen broke through the middle of their ranks, **running over so many**

358. C. uses the Spanish term *barbacoa*, which comes from an Arawak term that refers to a platform made with twigs or branches used for sleeping or grilling meat. It is the origin of the English word *barbecue*.

that they were pushed into the water, **where many drowned,** while others were forced off the causeway. They spent the day fighting only the Xochimilca and their Mexica friends. When the battle calmed, Cortés ordered the principal houses burned, sparing those where our men were lodged. He remained there **with his people** for three days, not ceasing to fight **until the good Cortés and his army exhausted the enemies through combat.** On the fourth day, he left for Coyohuacan,[359] two leagues away. The Xochimilca pursued the Spaniards, **who held them off with their escopetas, making them retreat in shame, for they did not achieve their revenge.**

Coyoacan [LdeG: Colhuacan] was **completely** abandoned, **as everyone had fled to the mountains.** Because Cortés planned to besiege Mexico **from Coyoacan,** which was one and a half leagues distant by causeway, he stayed there two days, demolishing the idols **these barbarians worshipped** and scouting for a camp site **or fort** and a safe harbor for the brigantines. Accompanied by two hundred Spaniards and five horsemen, **Captain** Cortés **finally** sighted Mexico. **The others he sent to Tetzcoco by a different route.** He attacked a barricade, which he took **despite a fierce defense.** With many Spaniards wounded, he **was forced to** return to Tetzcoco, **sorely in need of the Indian friends he had left there.** As he completed his journey around the lake and observed the lay of the land, he met **the Mexica and** the Colhuaque in combat, **killing many enemy Indians in his path.**

Chapter 132. On the Canal **Cortés Built from Tetzcoco to the Lake** to Bring the Brigantines to the Water, **and Other Things**

(f. 106) When he arrived at Tetzcoco, Cortés found many Spaniards who had recently come to join his campaign, drawn by the great renown spread **in the [Caribbean] islands of New Spain, as Cortés had named the land.** These Spaniards brought many arms, horses, **and other goods needed at the time. Thus, the islands were being depopulated by those who came to serve Cortés,** although Velázquez obstructed the way for many of them. **Filled with malice and envy toward Cortés because of his good fortune, Velázquez wanted no one to support or join his cause.** But Cortés **loved all his friends and cherished them so that he** was very generous. He never tired of granting **them** favors **and**

359. Coyoacan (and hereinafter). It was an important polity and had once been part of the Tepaneca's territory. Located just south of the capital, Cortés used it as a site from which to launch (in part) his campaign against Mexico Tenochtitlan; once Mexico Tenochtitlan was leveled, Coyoacan served as his headquarters while the city was being rebuilt.

attracted even those who sided with Velázquez with grace and good treatment. He made certain to honor and please them so they would not complain that he was stingy, but another Alexander the Great in his munificence.

While Cortés occupied himself with matters relating to war, numerous lords **and caciques principales** came from many towns to submit to his authority, **seeking his protection against the Mexica. They presented serious complaints about King Quauhtemoc and the Colhuaque. Moreover,** they were afraid of being destroyed **if they did not submit, as had happened to other towns that the Spaniards had punished for their rebelliousness. Captain** Cortés **was therefore very happy, all the more because he** had a great number of Spaniards and an army of **countless** Indians.

The captain of **the city of** Segura de la Frontera, **whom Cortés had left at a fortress bordering enemy territory,** sent Cortés a letter by Spanish **messenger,** stating:

Most Noble **Lord and** Lords,

I have written at least two or three letters without receiving a reply **(**and I believe that this letter will also remain unanswered, **such is my misfortune). I have sent notice that** the **courageous** Colhuaque wage harsh wars and inflict **much** damage **on our friends across this land.** We have fought them **many times,** and **still they attack us.** We have defeated them, **and each time they leave (as they say) with their tail between their legs.** The **entire** province wishes **greatly** to meet your lordship and submit **to the imperial crown of don Carlos, our lord. We are sorely in need of Spaniards so we will not have to worry about the many enemies who wage war on us every day. We beg your lordship, as captain general, that you and all the captains commiserate with the few friends suffering this exile and** send us at least thirty Spaniards **to join our company, for which we will be very grateful.**

On receiving the letter, Cortés was perplexed by how strongly they begged for help. As he saw that they were asking for men at the worst[360] **possible time, he wrote to the captain requesting that he be forgiven, for** he was unable to help, being occupied with the siege of Mexico. He thanked him heartily, however, telling him to be patient as he would see them (f. 106v) soon. **They should guard their fort, the towns, and their few friends. Cortés promised to pay them double the price for the hardships they had to endure.** The captain was one of the Spaniards Cortés

360. C. uses *friba*, the meaning of which is unknown to us: *en la mas friba ocasion de sus trauajos*.

had sent to the provinces of Chinantla[361] the previous year in order to discover the secrets of the land, find gold, and conduct other business. The lord of that province had appointed the Spaniard as his captain against the Colhua enemies, who waged war for having Spaniards among them after the death of **the great** Moteuczoma. Although always victorious thanks to good skills and effort, the Spaniard wrote as often as he said **(**once he knew the Spaniards were in Tepeaca**).** But only this letter reached the Spaniards. Our men rejoiced upon learning that the Spaniards were still alive with **Lord** Chinantla[362] [LdeG: on their side]. They praised God for the favors he granted them and spoke only of how those Spaniards had escaped; as the Spaniards were forced out of Mexico, the Indians killed all those who were tending to businesses and mines.

Cortés pressed the siege, gathering what he needed. He brought supplies and prepared the equipment for scaling walls and waging war. He hurried to nail **and caulk** the brigantines and finish the canal leading to the lake. It measured half a league in length, more than twelve feet wide, and was two estados deep at its most shallow point, the depth necessary to counter the pressure of the lake water and the width to accommodate the brigantines. The canal walls were lined with wooden stakes, with a fence along the top. Cortés made use of an irrigation canal already in place, thus it took fifty days to finish the canal **so that all the people would see they were working on it. More than** eight thousand Indians from Tetzcoco **and other friendly towns worked on it. Most admirable was the dedication and urgency that more than one thousand Indians invested on a daily basis without stopping.** This was an undertaking **of extraordinary greatness, one** worth remembering.

The brigantines were finally caulked with oakum **from the land,** cotton, and oil for lack of tallow. Tar **(as people call it)** was made, according to some, with human fat from those killed in battle and not deliberately slaughtered **(**an inhuman practice, alien to Spaniards**).** Accustomed to human sacrifice, **the Indians' cruelties were inhumane, as** they cut open the dead bodies and extracted the fat **or grease**, which they kept for curing wounds and other things. **As soon as** the brigantines **were finished, they** were launched into the lake. Captain Cortés passed review **of his people,** counting nine hundred Spanish **men**, eighty-six with horses, one hundred and eighteen with crossbows and escopetas, and the rest with pikes, shields, or halberds, not counting the swords and knives each car-

361. Gerhard, *Guide*, 43, locates a Chinantla in southern Puebla and another in Oaxaca, 302. The area was later disputed among the polities of Veracruz, Segura de la Frontera, and Espíritu Santo.

362. As in the case of Tabasco (see Chapter 23, note 89), LdeG uses a place name for a personal name here.

ried. Some wore armor and many breastplates and tunics of hide. **In addition,** he counted **four** [LdeG: three] pieces of artillery of thick cast iron and fifteen smaller ones of bronze, as well as twelve *quintales*[363] of gunpowder and many balls **or bullets.** So great were the numbers of people, arms, and ammunition employed by Cortés in the siege of Mexico, (f. 107) the largest and best-fortified city in the Indies and the New World. He positioned a small cannon in each brigantine, assigning the rest to the army. He had the rules of war announced again, asking all to comply with them. Pointing to the brigantines in the canal, he stated:

My Brothers and Companions,

You know the brigantines are built and ready. You well know the hardship they have cost us and the expense and sweat they have cost our friends to bring them here. My greatest hope for taking Mexico quickly lies in [the brigantines], for with their help we will burn all the boats in the city and trap them in the canals. In this manner we will cause as much damage to the enemies on water as to their army on land, for they prefer to go without food than without boats. I have brought one hundred thousand friends to besiege Mexico, who are the most skillful and courageous men in these parts. You will not want for food, for it has been generously provided. Your duty is to fight as always and pray to God for health and victory, for the outcome is in His hands.

[Chapter 133. LdeG: Cortés's Army at the Siege of Mexico][364]

Having warned his men, the following day [Cortés] sent many messengers to summon the people of the provinces of Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, Cholola, Chalco, and other towns to come within ten days to Tetzcoco with their arms and all the equipment necessary for the siege, for the brigantines were built and everything was ready. The Spaniards were so anxious to attack the city that they could not wait an hour past the deadline. Their allies, not wanting the siege to begin in their absence, came as ordered without delay. More than sixty thousand men entered the city in formation, the most splendid and well-armed peoples following the customs of their lands. Cortés came out to see and receive them, lodging them well.

On the second day of the feast of the Holy Spirit [Pentecost], all the Spaniards went to the square, where Cortés appointed three captains

363. A quintal is a unit of weight equal to 100 kilograms (about 220.46 pounds).
364. C. or the copyist has omitted the chapter title. The copyist added it later in the margin.

as field commanders among whom he divided the army. One was Pedro de Alvarado, to whom Cortés gave thirty horsemen, one hundred and seventy foot soldiers, two pieces of artillery, and more than thirty thousand Indians to set up camp in Tlacopan. Cortés gave Cristóbal de Olid, another of his captains, thirty-three horsemen, one hundred and eighty infantry, two cannons, and close to thirty thousand Indians to take position in Colhuacan.[365] To Gonzalo de Sandoval, his other field commander, he gave twenty-three horsemen, one hundred and sixty infantry men, two cannons, and more than forty thousand Indians from Chalco, Chololа, Huexotzinco, and other places in order to destroy Iztacpalapan and set up his camp wherever he saw fit. In each brigantine he positioned a cannon with six escopeteros or crossbowmen and twenty-three Spaniards, the most skillful on water. He named captains and inspectors from among them, and he appointed himself commander[366] of the fleet, which caused some of his company leaders who were to attack by land to complain, thinking they were in greater danger. They asked him to march with (f. 107v) the army instead of the fleet. Cortés ignored their request, not only because there was more danger on the water, but because it was important that he direct his attention to the brigantines and the battle on water, which they had never experienced, while they had fought on land many times.

Alvarado and Olid departed on May 10 and reached Acolman where the two **captains** argued over their lodgings. Had Cortés not sent someone to calm them down, there would have been great disturbances and even deaths. They slept the following night in Xilotepec **or Ecatepec (now known as San Cristóbal),**[367] which had been abandoned. Early on the third **day** they entered Tlacopan, which was deserted, like all the towns around the lake. They lodged in the houses of **Lord Totoquihuaccin**[368] **and his people.** The Tlaxcalteca came within sight of Mexico from the causeway and fought the enemy until nightfall. The next day, May 13, Olid left for Chapoltepec **(which the kings of Mexico used for recreation)** and broke the water conduits at **their** source, leaving Mexico without water as Cortés had ordered. The enemies offered harsh resistance, fighting by water and land. The loss of a source of water caused

365. Coyoacan in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 264–65. Note that although C. does not correct LdeG's erroneous use of Colhuacan here in f. 107, he does correct the reference in f. 105v and f. 107v., as noted in footnote 359.

366. Both C. and LdeG use the Spanish *general* as Cortés's self-appointed title.

367. Gerhard, *Guide*, 226, describes Ecatepec as an important polity and affiliate of the Mexica, located to the north of Mexico Tenochtitlan.

368. For information about a Totoquihuaztli the elder, ruler of Tlacopan, see *CC*, 2:205.

them much hardship, since, as I stated earlier, it supplied the city. Pedro de Alvarado occupied himself in repairing the ruptures in the causeway for the horses, mending the bridges, and filling the canals. As there was much to do, they spent three days there fighting, with some Spaniards injured and many Indian friends dead. Nevertheless, they gained some bridges and barricades. Obeying Cortés's orders, Alvarado remained in Tlacopan with his company, while Olid left with his for Colhuacan **or Coyoacan.** They took over the houses of the lords in those cities and clashed daily with the enemy or left in groups to ransack the countryside, bringing back to their camps centli **or ears of maize,** fruit, and other provisions from the mountain towns. They spent an entire week occupied in this manner **while awaiting Cortés's call to arms.**

[Chapter 134]. The Battle and Victory of the Brigantines over the Acales

When King Quauhtemoc learned that Cortés had launched his brigantines into the lake with a great army to lay siege to Mexico, he immediately summoned the lords and captains of his kingdom to devise a solution. **Among them there were Coanacochtzin, lord of Tetzcoco, Tetlepanqueçatl, lord of Tlacopan, Tlacotzin Cihuacoatl, president or supreme chief justice, Petlautzin, Motelchiutzin Teuhctlamacacazqui,**[369] **Coatzin, Ahuelitoctzin, and Opicatl Popocatzin, powerful men ready for any war.** Having confidence in the city's large population and fortifications, some incited him to wage war, while others **(**who were concerned about the people's health and well-being and thinking that the Spanish prisoners should not be sacrificed but kept alive to negotiate a truce**)** counseled him to make peace. Yet others told him to ask the gods what they wished. The king, who was more inclined toward peace than war, said he would consult and dialogue with his (f. 108) idols, and that he would inform them of their talk. In truth, he wished to reach an agreement with Cortés, fearing what actually happened **or occurred** later. Nonetheless, since he saw his men so determined, he sacrificed four Spaniards **(**who were kept alive in cages**)** to **his** gods of war, along with four thousand **Indians (**according to some, and I believe there were plenty, but not quite so many**).** He spoke with the devil in the guise of

369. The spelling is surely Teuhctlamacazqui. It is likely that this is not the name of a separate individual but Moteulchiuhtzin's title, which would translate as "lord priest." He was later baptized don Andrés Motelchiuhtzin and installed as *quauhtlatoani*, "interim ruler," of Mexico Tenochtitlan. C. makes a point of noting that he was "only a Mexica, not a nobleman," meaning that he was not of the official royal lineage; *CC*, 2:39.

Huitzilopochtli, who told him not to fear the Spaniards, **not to be afraid of them** or **of** the others who came with them, **for they were few in number**, and therefore would not press on with their siege. Quauhtemoc should come out and await them with no fear at all, because he would help him kill his enemies.

After hearing these words from the devil, Quauhtemoctzin had his men draw the bridges, build fortifications, keep guard over the city, and assemble five thousand boats **or canoes**. He was so busy when Captains Cristóbal de Olid and Pedro de Alvarado arrived at the bridges to do battle and cut off the city's water supply, that he did not fear them. Rather, he threatened them from Mexico. He stated that by sacrificing them he would gladden the gods and engorge his snakes with blood and his tigers with flesh, for they were already fattened with Christians. They also yelled at the Tlaxcalteca:

> Cuckolds! Slaves! Traitors to your gods and king! Since you do not regret what you are doing against your lords, you will die a terrible death here, as you succumb to hunger or our knives, or we will seize and eat you, making of you the greatest sacrifice and banquet ever in this land. As a sign and guarantee, we will toss you the arms and legs of your own men, whom we sacrifice in order to achieve victory. Later, we will go to **our** [LdeG: your] land, we will raze your houses, and we will leave your lineage no survivors.

The Tlaxcalteca made fun of such boasts, answering that the Mexica should submit to Cortés rather than resist him, fight instead of bluster, and keep silent rather than insult their betters. If the Mexica wanted something, they should come out into the open where they would soon reach the end of their knavery, dominion, and even their lives. The boasts and challenges the Indians exchanged were worth hearing. Cortés, who was aware of these events and what took place every day, sent Gonzalo de Sandoval to take Iztacpalapan, and he boarded ship to go there as well. Sandoval began fighting Iztacpalapan from one direction, while the residents, fearful or wishing to go to Mexico, left through another and sought shelter in their boats. On entering, our men set the town on fire. Soon afterward, Cortés arrived at a large and formidable crag surrounded by water and defended by Colhuaque. Seeing the brigantines come at full sail, the Colhuaque sent smoke signals and began yelling, throwing rocks, and shooting arrows as they drew near.

Cortés charged the peak with up to one hundred and fifty **Spanish** companions; he seized the barricades they had built as a defense, and climbing to the top with great effort, he fought so fiercely that he left no man alive, only women and children. Although twenty-five Spaniards were wounded, it was a magnificent victory, due to the slaughter

of enemies, the fright it gave them, and because it was such a formidable (f. 108v) town. At the time, there were so many fires and so much smoke around the lake and in the mountains that everything seemed to be burning. Knowing the brigantines were on their way, the Mexica came out in their boats. Several nobles took five hundred of the best ones and pressed ahead to fight the Spaniards, believing they would prevail, or at least to test those infamous ships. Cortés boarded his ship with the spoils. He ordered his men to remain calm and stay together to better resist and have the adversaries believe it was done out of fear, so they would perish after a disordered attack. The men with the five hundred **canoes** [LdeG: boats] advanced with great haste, but then stopped at the distance of one harquebus shot to await the fleet. The Mexica did not wish to do battle since their canoes were few and worn out. Little by little, the number of canoes increased so much that they filled the lake. They gave many cries and made so much noise with drums, conch shells, and other horns that they could not hear one another. They shouted many insults and threats, much as they had done before to other Spaniards and Tlaxcalteca.

When each side was fully armed and ready for battle, a wind off the land blew on the brigantines' stern in so timely and favorable a manner that it seemed a miracle. Praising God, Cortés told the captains to keep attacking all together until they had encircled the enemies in Mexico, for it was our Lord's wish to give them such a wind to lead them to victory. He also told them how significant it was to win the battle upon their first effort so the boats would fear the brigantines after the first encounter. Having said it, they rammed the canoes, which had begun to flee at the change in the weather, with such force they broke some in half and sank others.

They killed those who took up arms and defended themselves, and they promptly wrecked the canoes, finding less resistance than anticipated. They followed the canoes for two leagues, corralled them in the city, and captured some lords, many nobles, and others. Nobody knew how many died in battle, but the lake seemed made of blood. It was an overwhelming victory and held the key to this war, because our men gained control of the lake and the enemies suffered great fright and loss. The canoes would not have been destroyed so rapidly had there not been so many in each other's way and had better climate conditions prevailed.

As soon as Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid saw the wreckage and damage to the canoes that Cortés had made with the brigantines, they entered through the causeway with their squadrons, fighting and taking some bridges and barricades in spite of fierce resistance. With the brigantines, they made their enemies retreat one league, forcing them to go from the lake to the other side, since they had no other small

vessels. Although Alvarado and Olid turned back, Cortés went forward and, since no canoes appeared, he leapt with thirty Spaniards onto the causeway that runs from **Iztacpalapan.** He attacked two small towers with idols enclosed by low stone masonry walls, where Moteuczoma had received him **(which is where the church of our Lord San Antón, called Xolloco,**[370] **is now located).** He took the towers, although in great danger and with much effort, for there were many inside who defended them well. He had three small cannons brought out to fire on the enemy amassed (f. 109) on the causeway, who were unwilling [LdeG: and difficult] to disperse. They fired once, inflicting much damage, but since the gunpowder flamed out due to the artilleryman's carelessness and the sun was setting, both sides ceased fighting. Although Cortés had thought and agreed upon other plans with his captains, he stayed the night, sending for gunpowder from Gonzalo de Sandoval's campsite, as well as fifty foot soldiers from his guard and half the people in Colhuacan **or Coyoacan.**

[Chapter 135]. How Cortés Lay Siege to Mexico

Cortés spent that night at the entrance to Mexico in as much peril as fear, for he had no more than one hundred **Spanish** companions, since the rest were needed in the brigantines. Toward midnight, a large number of enemies assailed him by boat and on foot along the causeway with horrible screams and clouds of arrows. However, although a surprise, the attack meant nothing, as they usually do not wage war at that hour. Some say the Mexica turned around due to the damage inflicted by the brigantines' cannon shots. At dawn, eight horsemen and up to eighty of Cristóbal de Olid's foot soldiers reached Cortés, and the Mexica began assaulting the towers by land and lake with their customary shouting and yelling. Cortés came at them, chasing them down the causeway and taking a bridge with its bulwark. He inflicted so much damage with his cannons and horses that he surrounded and followed [the Mexica] to the first houses in the city. Since Cortés's men were hurt and wounded by the men in the canoes, he demolished a stretch of causeway that ran near his encampment so that four brigantines could go across. After a few attacks, the brigantines trapped the canoes against the houses, and thus Cortés gained control of both lakes.

The next day **Captain** Gonzalo de Sandoval left Iztacpalapan for Colhuacan, **or Coyoacan.** Along the way he took and destroyed a small

370. [LdeG: Solloco]. This is C.'s Mexico City residence and place of employment.

city on the lake **called Mexacatzinco,**[371] because they came out to fight. Cortés sent him two brigantines so they could use them as bridges to pass through the causeway **arch where the water flowed** that had been destroyed by the enemies. Sandoval left his men with Cristóbal de Olid, and he and ten horsemen joined Cortés, finding him in full battle against those from Mexico. When he dismounted to fight, his foot was impaled by a spear. Many other Spaniards were wounded that day, but they exacted such revenge on their enemies that from then on the Mexica displayed more fear and less **resolve and** pride than usual. With all he had done, Cortés was able to set up camp wherever he wished and organize his men at will, obtaining supplies of bread and other necessities. It took six days, none of which went by without a skirmish. The brigantines came across canals that allowed them to navigate around the city, which was very useful. They went deep into Mexico and burned many houses on the outskirts. They besieged Mexico from all four sides, although they initially planned to attack from three. Cortés positioned himself in between the two towers on the causeway that separates the lakes; Pedro de Alvarado was on **the causeway to** Tlacopan; Cristóbal de Olid was in **Coyoacan** [LdeG: Colhuacan]; and Gonzalo de Sandoval, I believe, in Xaltoca**n or Tenayocan**, because Alvarado and others said that, on seeing themselves in danger, the Mexica would leave on that side [of the lake][372] if [the Spaniards] did not protect a small causeway that went (f. 109v) there. Cortés did not mind leaving the enemies an exit, particularly from so great a stronghold, but he feared that they would use it to bring in from the mainland food, weapons, and men **to assist them**. Thus, **Captain** Cortés thought to beat his opponents on land rather than on water, and in any other city but that one, **following the proverb**, if your enemy flees, build him a silver bridge.

[Chapter 136]. The First Skirmish in Mexico

On another day Cortés wished to enter Mexico through the [main] causeway and seize as much of the city as possible, testing the resolve of its residents. He sent word to Pedro de Alvarado and Gonzalo de Sandoval that each should attack from his respective encampment. He also told Cristóbal de Olid to send him some foot soldiers and a few horsemen, keeping the rest to guard the entrance to the causeway of Colhuacan from

371. Mexicaltzinco.

372. It is not clear which of the two sides not occupied by Alvarado (Coyoacan in the south or Tenayocan in the north) the text refers to, but since Tenayocan is the last one mentioned, we infer that it was the north side, where Tenayocan was located.

the people of Xochimilco, **Coyoacan** [LdeG: Colhuacan], Itztapalapan, **Huitzilopuchtlan** [LdeG: Huitzilopochtli],[373] Mexicaltzinco, Cuitlahuac, and other neighboring cities that were allied and subject **to Mexico,** so they would not attack them from the rear. He then ordered the brigantines to sail along the causeway's edge to guard them on both sides. He departed from his encampment very early in the morning with more than two hundred Spaniards and up to eighty thousand friends, and after a short stretch he found the enemy well armed and positioned to defend a break they had made in the causeway that measured a **good** spear in length and depth.

Cortés attacked, and they defended themselves ably behind a bastion until they were defeated. He pursued them to the entrance of the city, where there stood a tower with a very large bridge and formidable barricade under which flowed a great quantity of water. It was so difficult to assault and so frightful to cross that its mere sight inspired fear. The Mexica threw so many stones and arrows[374] that they left **no room** for any of our men. Still, he continued to attack the tower, and since he had all the brigantines locate to one side, he took it from the other with less effort than he imagined, which would have been an impossible feat without the brigantines.

As the enemy began to leave the barricade, the men leapt from the brigantines onto the land, with the army swimming at their side. The men of Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, **Chalco**, Cholola, and Tetzcoco blocked the bridge with stone and adobe, and the Spaniards went forward, taking another barricade on the main and broadest street in the city. Since it was not flooded, they crossed easily and followed their enemies to another bridge that was raised and had only one beam. Not all the adversaries could go over it, so they went by water in great haste to safe ground **because the brigantines could not pass beyond that point**. They removed the beam and prepared to defend themselves. On arriving, our men stopped, unable to go **through the water** [LdeG: without leaping into the water], a dangerous move without brigantines. Since **the Mexica** fought heartily from the streets and bastions, inflicting many injuries **on our men**, Cortés ordered two cannons fired into the street and crossbows and escopetas shot often. Much damage was thus inflicted on the city dwellers, who were less courageous than at first. Our men noticed this change, and some Spaniards, diving into the water, (f. 110) swam across. As soon as the enemies saw them coming, they fled the roofs and barricade they had defended for two hours. The [Spanish] army marched for-

373. Huitzilopochco, and later called Churubusco.
374. [LdeG: that they did not let our men reach them].

ward, and then Cortés had his Indians close off the bridge with materials from the barricade and other things. **This bridge is the one located near the Hospital de la Concepción, called Huitzillan by the natives.**

The Spaniards and their friends gave chase. At a distance of two crossbow shots, they found another bridge without a barricade near one of the main squares in the city. There, they set a cannon that inflicted great harm on the people in the square. Our men dared not go in, given the many Mexica inside; in the end they decided to enter, seeing that there was no water to cross. When the adversaries saw such determination at work, they turned their backs, each taking a path **to safety**, although the majority went to the Templo Mayor. The Spaniards and their friends went in pursuit, entered, and in a few **hours** [LdeG: attempts] drove them out, inspiring such fright that they were at wits' end. The Spaniards climbed the towers and cast down many idols, staying a while in the courtyard. **King** Quauhtemoc chastised his men for having fled, but they recovered their senses and acknowledged their cowardliness. Since there were no horses, they returned to fight, chasing **the Spaniards** from the towers and the entire temple compound, easily making them flee. Cortés and other captains stopped and confronted them under the courtyard arches, saying it was shameful to run. Ultimately, however, they could not remain there, seeing the danger and distress they were in, for they were under fierce attack. [The Spaniards] retreated to the square to regroup, but were driven away. **The artillery man** [LdeG: Some men] left the cannon I mentioned earlier unattended, unable to withstand the enemy's fury and fierceness. Around this time, three horsemen **with lances** arrived and entered the square, spearing the Indians. When the residents saw the horses they began to flee, and our men, recovering their spirits, counterattacked with such a drive that they again seized the Templo Mayor. Five Spaniards climbed the steps, entered the chapels, and then departed after killing ten or twelve Mexica who had sought protection there. Six more horsemen arrived to join the three others, and together they ambushed and killed more than thirty Mexica. Since it was late and his men were tired, Cortés gave the signal to turn back. So many enemies charged them on their retreat that, had it not been for the horsemen, many Spaniards would have been in peril. The Mexica attacked fearlessly, like rabid dogs, but the horses would have been of no use if Cortés had not thought to level the uneven surfaces of the street and causeway. They all fled, but **(**compelled by war**)**, fought well. Our men burned some houses along the street so no stones would be thrown from rooftops to injure them when reentering the city. Gonzalo de Sandoval and Pedro de Alvarado fought very well on behalf of their respective companies **as very brave men and captains.**

[Chapter 137]. The General Damage and Burning of Houses

At this time, don Fernando **de Alvarado Tecocoltzin, lord** of (f. 110v) Tetzcoco, was traveling across his domain, visiting and soliciting his vassals for their service and friendship to Cortés, and for this reason he was not at the siege. Due to his cunning or the Spaniards' success, he summoned almost the entire province of **Acolhuacan** [LdeG: Colhuacan], a subject town of Tetzcoco, along with six or seven of his brothers. He could not convince more to come, even though they numbered over one hundred **(**as will later be told**).** He appointed one of his brothers captain, the one called **Ixtlilxuxitl,**[375] **who after being baptized was called don Hernando Cortés Ixtlilxochitl**, a brave young man about twenty-four years old, and sent him to the siege with a group of fifty thousand combatants who were very well armed and provisioned. Cortés joyfully received and thanked them for their decision; he took thirty thousand for his camp and distributed the rest among other garrisons. The assistance and favor that don Fernando **Tecocoltzin** granted Cortés were greatly resented in Mexico, for it meant that the Mexica lost their support, which included relatives, brothers, and even the parents of many who were in the city with Quauhtemoctzin. Two days after the arrival of **don Hernando Cortés Ixtlilxochitl,** the people of Xochimilco, together with some mountain dwellers who spoke the language called Otomitl, came to offer their services to Cortés, asking that their delay be forgiven, and offering people and supplies for the siege.

Cortés was heartened by their arrival and support, since the people in the Colhuacan encampment would be safe now that these people were their friends. He treated their ambassadors quite well and told them he would wage war against the city in three days, so they should all come back then with weapons, and that by this he would know whether they were his friends, and then he sent them on their way. They promised to return, and kept their word. Cortés sent three brigantines to Sandoval, and another three to Pedro de Alvarado to keep the Mexica from reaching the land in order to load their canoes with water, fruit, centli, and other supplies. The brigantines also assisted and guarded the Spaniards every time they entered by the causeway to fight the city. He knew well how useful it was to have the ships remain near the bridges, for their captains sailed night and day along the coast and lake towns. There they carried out significant attacks, taking many of the enemies' boats **or canoes** loaded with people and supplies and not permitting any to come in or depart.

375. Ixtlilxochitl.

The day he challenged his enemies in battle, Cortés heard mass, gave orders to his captains, and left his encampment with twenty horse**men**, three hundred Spaniards, a great crowd of friends, and two or three pieces of artillery. He soon faced his enemies; since they had not been in battle for two or three days, they had opened at their pleasure all the places that our men had blocked, erecting even better defenses than before and awaiting him with their customary yells. However, they let their guard down after seeing brigantines on both sides of the causeway. Our men soon realized the harm they were inflicting, and they jumped from the brigantines to the ground, securing (f. 111) the barricade and the bridge. The army then came in, chasing the enemies, who sought refuge at another bridge a short distance away. Our men took this bridge even more quickly, but with great effort and chased them to another bridge. Fighting from bridge to bridge, they threw the Mexica from the causeway, the street, and even the square. With up to ten thousand Indians, Cortés closed all the drainages with stone**s**, adobe, and wood and leveled the bad roads. There was so much to do that all ten thousand Indians were busy until vespers. During this time, the Spaniards and friends skirmished with the residents of the city, killing many **on the causeways and** in several ambushes. Moreover, the horsemen rode on the streets that had no water or bridges, spearing some of the residents, forcing them to stay inside their houses and temples. What our Indians did and said to the city dwellers was noteworthy, because at times they challenged them **to fight** and other times they invited them to dine, showing them men's legs, arms, and other body parts. They said, "This flesh is yours; tonight we will dine on it and tomorrow we will have it for lunch. We will return later for more, so do not flee, since you are brave men, and it is better for you to die in battle than of hunger." After this, each called out **on behalf of** the name of his city, setting houses on fire.

The Mexica were hurt by the Spaniards' ill treatment, but they were hurt more so by their subjects' insults, and by hearing at their gates, "Victory! Victory! Tlaxcala! Chalco! Tetzcoco! Xochimilco!" and other such towns. However, the boasts about eating their flesh were of little concern to the Mexica, as they too ate those they killed. Upon seeing the Mexica so hardened and determined to defend themselves or die, Cortés came to two conclusions. First, that there remained few or none of the riches he had seen and enjoyed while Moteuczoma was alive, and second, that they gave him compelling reason to completely destroy them. Both of these thoughts troubled him, particularly the latter. He thought to find a way to frighten them and make them understand their error, and the damage they would receive. Therefore, he destroyed many towers and burned their idols, and also set fire to the

large buildings where he had rested earlier, **which he had entered the first time he came**, along with the House of Birds nearby. There was no Spaniard who was not sorry to see such magnificent houses go up in flames, particularly those who had seen them before. However, they let them burn because it filled the city dwellers with sorrow, for never had the Mexica or men of that land thought that any human force **(**much less that of a few Spaniards**)** could enter Mexico to aggrieve them, torching the heart of the city.

While the fires burned, Cortés gathered his men and returned to camp. The enemies tried to put the fire out, but they could not, and as they saw their opponents leave, they charged them fiercely with great cries, killing those who lagged behind loaded with spoils. The horsemen, who could easily ride down the street (f. 111v) and causeway, stopped them with spear thrusts. Thus, before nightfall, our men were back in camp and the enemies in their houses, the former saddened, the latter tired. The killing was great that day, but the burning of the houses greater still. In addition to those mentioned, many other houses were burned by the brigantines wherever they went. The other captains came into the city, but since they merely dispersed the enemy, there is not much to tell.

[Chapter 138]. On the Diligence of Quauhtemoc and Cortés

Early the next morning after hearing mass, Cortés returned to the city with the same men in formation, so their adversaries would not have a chance to open the bridges or build fortifications. Although he had awakened very early, it was already too late, because the city residents did not sleep. As soon as the enemy left, they took shovels and pickaxes to open what was closed, **the irrigation ditches**. They built barricades with the materials they dug out, rebuilding their fortifications as they were before. Many fainted and even died from hunger and lack of sleep, as they were exhausted from the work. But they could not stop, for Quauhtemoc was among them.

Despite the difficulty, Cortés assaulted and took two bridges with barricades. This combat lasted from eight in the morning until one in the afternoon, with his men suffering immeasurably, given the great heat and their effort. They ran out of gunpowder and shot for the escopetas and arrows for the crossbows, using up their reserves. They had to work hard to block the [LdeG: two] bridges in order to win. That day, while the Spaniards retreated, some were wounded, since the enemies charged our men as if they were fleeing. They came at them so blindly and with such passion that they failed to notice the horsemen's ambushes. Many **of the Mexica** died, even

the vanguard, the bravest among them. Despite their injuries, they did not let up until they saw the Spaniards leave the city. On that day, Pedro de Alvarado captured two bridges on his causeway,[376] burning a number of houses with the help of the three brigantines and killing many enemies.

Some Spaniards blamed Cortés **for their losses**, because he would not move his camp as he gained land. The reasons for not doing so were good ones. Every day he had to do the same work, which increased daily, to retake and block the bridges and water channels. This was done at considerable risk, as they were forced to swim every time they captured a bridge. Some did not know how to swim, while others did not dare, and still others refused. Their enemies kept them from coming out of the water by stabbing and spearing them, so they either drowned or were wounded. Others said that since the camp was not moved they should post guards at the bridges. Although Cortés understood their arguments, he did not wish to act on them, for if the encampment was moved into the square (f. 112) their adversaries would certainly surround them. The city was very large and its dwellers many, and thus the besieger would become the besieged. [The Spaniards] would be fiercely attacked every hour of the day or night. If they lost the causeway, they would not be able to resist the attacks and would have nothing to eat, **according to Cortés**. Holding the bridges was impossible, or at least doubtful, for two reasons. First, because the Spaniards were few, and, having tired during the day, they could not fight at night. Second, if the Indians were put in charge of the bridges, their defense was uncertain while their loss or destruction would be certain, with terrible consequences. For these reasons and because he trusted his Spaniards, who followed him loyally no matter what, he kept his own counsel and that of no one else.

[Chapter 139]. How Cortés Had Two Hundred Thousand Men Surround Mexico

Either because the Chalca were so loyal to the Spaniards or because they were such great enemies of the Mexica, they summoned many towns to wage war against the peoples of Iztacpalapan, Mexicaltzinco, **Cuitlahuac**, Huitzilopochtli, Colhuacan, and other places on the freshwater lake that had not declared their friendship to Cortés, despite not having challenged him after he lay siege to Mexico. Since the Spaniards prevailed over the Mexica, many ambassadors from those towns entrusted themselves to Cortés, begging his forgiveness for what had happened and

376. This should be the Tlacopan causeway.

that he order the Chalca to not inflict any more losses. He took them in, saying that nothing more terrible would happen, that his quarrel was not with them but with the Mexica. In order to determine whether [LdeG: their entreaty] was true, he told them that he would not lift the siege **he had imposed on Mexico** until the city was captured through peace or war. He asked for their acalles, as they had many, and for as many men as could be armed. He also asked for some men to build houses for the Spaniards, since they had none and the heavy rain season had begun. They promised to comply, and thus several men from their towns built many small houses on the causeway between the towers where the camp was located. The Spaniards fit comfortably within, along with two thousand Indians who served them, and the rest always slept not more than a league and a half away in Colhuacan. They also provided the camp with some bread, fish, and countless cherries, which are so plentiful that they can feed twice the number of people who then inhabited the land. This fruit lasts for six months and is somewhat different from ours.

All the important towns in the region pledged themselves to Cortés, and their people came and went freely among the Spaniards' camps, some to help, others to eat, yet others to steal, and many to look around, and thus I believe there were two hundred (f. 112v) thousand men surrounding Mexico. Even though it was a great thing for the **good** Cortés to be Captain **General** of such a large army, his ability and grace to govern and rule for so long a time without mutinies or fights were even greater. Cortés wished to capture and level the street and causeway that begins at Tlacopan, a principal road with seven bridges, so he could have free access to Pedro de Alvarado **and because Alvarado was on that side**, and he thought that was all he needed to do. He thus summoned the people and boats from Iztacpalapan and the other towns on the freshwater lake, and three thousand came in; he placed five hundred [LdeG: one thousand] with four brigantines on the **great** lake **that encircled Mexico**. The remaining fifteen hundred he sent to the other lake with the three brigantines to sail around the city, burn houses, and inflict as much damage as they could. He commanded each garrison to enter through its respective quarter and street, killing, taking, and destroying as much as possible. He entered through the street of Tlacopan with eighty thousand men, capturing and blocking three of its bridges, and then returned to his post, leaving the rest for another day. The next day he took the same street with the same men and formation and captured a large section of the city. Quauhtemoc did not sue him for peace, which astounded Cortés, as he regretted the damage he inflicted as much as what he suffered in exchange.

[Chapter 140]. What Pedro de Alvarado Did in Order to Advance

Pedro de Alvarado wished to transfer his camp to Tlatelolco's square because of the risk and effort it would take to hold the bridges captured by his Spaniards on foot and on horseback, since the camp was currently three quarters of a league distant. He wanted to advance as far as his captain, as his company complained to him that it would be an affront should Cortés or someone else capture the square before they did, for they were closer to it than anyone else. Therefore, he decided to take the remaining bridges on his causeway and move to the square. He left with all the men in his garrison, arriving at a broken bridge sixty pasos in length, which had been sunk two estados into the water to keep our men from passing. Alvarado attacked and took it, crossing the water with the aid of the three brigantines. He told some men to block it, and he chased the enemy with about fifty Spaniards. Since the residents saw only those few men **(**for the horsemen could not get across**),** they attacked him so suddenly and with such resolve that they made him turn around and leap into the water. He did not even notice that many of our Indians were killed or that they seized four Spaniards there, whom they sacrificed **to their gods** and ate so everyone could see. Alvarado realized his madness in not trusting Cortés, who always told him not to move forward (f. 113) without first preparing the way. Those who gave Alvarado such advice paid with their lives, to Cortés's sorrow. The same would have happened had he followed those who proposed he move directly into the market square [in Tlatelolco]. [Alvarado] had better plans, since every house became an island **(as there was much water about),** the causeways were broken in many places, and the rooftops were full of **stones and** rocks, for Quauhtemoc had prepared these and many other ruses. Cortés went to see where Pedro de Alvarado had moved his camp in order to admonish him for what he did and inform him of what he must do. [LdeG: Since Cortés found him so deep inside the city] [he] noted all the many bad roads that **Alvarado** had captured, he did not blame but praised him. Before Cortés returned to camp, they discussed **and talked about** many things related to the end of the siege.

[Chapter 141]. The Mexica's Festivities and Sacrifices over a Victory

Cortés delayed moving his camp to the **main** square [in Tenochtitlan] for the reasons mentioned above, although he entered or had his men enter the city every day to fight the residents and see if Quauhtemoc would turn himself in, and also because their entry endangered them, for the enemies were now united and very strong. Seeing his determination

and the danger past, all the Spaniards, along with the king's treasurer, beseeched and urged him to occupy the square. He responded that they spoke like brave men but should first consider it carefully, since the enemies were well protected and most determined to die defending themselves. So much did they remonstrate that in the end he granted their wish and announced they would go in the following day. He sent two servants with written instructions to Gonzalo de Sandoval, **who was in his garrison**, and to Pedro de Alvarado. In sum, he instructed Sandoval to pack all his garrison's equipment as if moving camp and to place ten horsemen on the causeway behind some **large** houses to spear the city dwellers who, thinking they were fleeing, would pursue them. Sandoval was then to go with ten horsemen, one hundred foot soldiers, and the brigantine to where Pedro de Alvarado was to capture the pass where Alvarado's men had dispersed. If he took it, he was to block it before advancing. If he advanced, he should not go farther or capture other passes without blocking them. Alvarado was to enter the city immediately and provide Cortés with eighty Spaniards. At the same time, he ordered the other seven brigantines to guide the three thousand boats **or canoes of the Indian friends** across both lakes, as before.

Cortés divided the people in his camp into three companies, as there were three streets that led to the square. The treasurer **Julián de Alderete**[377] (f. 113v) and the accountant **Alonso de Grados**[378] took one street, **which was the middle one, called Huecatitlan,** with seventy Spaniards, twenty thousand Indians, eight horses, twelve men with hoes, and many ditch diggers to close the water channels, level the bridges, and destroy houses. He sent Jorge de Alvarado and Andrés de Tapia with eighty Spaniards and ten thousand Indians into the other street, **called Teçontlalnamacoia,** to place two cannons and eight horsemen at its entrance. Cortés took the other **main street, now called Santa Ana, which leads to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe; he entered it** with a large number of friends and one hundred Spanish foot soldiers, twenty-five of whom were crossbowmen and escopeteros. He told eight of his horsemen to stay behind and not follow until he sent word. In this manner, all entered at the same time, each company from its side, accomplishing great marvels, bringing down men and barricades, and capturing bridges. They

377. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 277, states that although Alderete had been appointed the king's treasurer while still in Santo Domingo, he fought as a crossbowman in the battles for Mexico Tenochtitlan.

378. Ibid., 62, has Alonso de Grado and states that he held several political offices in New Spain and had considerable influence on Cortés. After the fall of the capital, Cortés gave him Isabel de Moteuczoma, daughter of Moteuczoma Xocoyotl, and Grado became her fourth (first Spanish) husband. He received Chiautla in encomienda.

arrived near the tianquiztli; and so many of our Indian friends charged that they went through the houses brazenly looting them, and seeing how things were going it seemed that all would be won that day. Cortés told them not to advance, that much had been accomplished already, for things could turn. They should also confirm that the captured bridges were completely blocked, for they were key to either risk or victory. The men with the treasurer, seeking victory and more ground, left a large breach falsely blocked, about twelve pasos long and two estados deep.

As soon as Cortés knew of it, he moved to repair the breach. Once he arrived, he saw his men come fleeing and leaping into the water, for fear of the many **Indian** enemies in pursuit to kill them. Also by water, their boats took many of our friends and even some Spaniards alive. All that Cortés and the other fifteen men could do was to give a hand to the fallen. Some emerged wounded, others half drowned, and most without weapons. Cortés and his fifteen companions did not realize the danger, so fixated were they on rescuing the men from the water and aiding them. They were therefore surrounded by many enemies. Several Mexica grabbed Cortés and would have carried him away were it not for his servant Francisco de Olea, who with his knife cut off the hands of the man who seized him. The enemies killed [Olea] on the spot, and he died so his master would live. At this point the captain of the guard Antonio de Quiñones forcibly dragged Cortés by the arm from the enemies he was fiercely fighting. Having heard the news that Cortés had been taken, the Spaniards joined the mêlée, and a horseman cleared **or came clearing** some space, but he was spun around by a spear thrust in his throat and **fell dead to the ground**. Mounted on a horse brought to him, Cortés gathered the Spaniards when the fight subsided, since they could not fight well there (f. 114) on horseback. He abandoned this bad road for the good and wide street of Tlacopan. Guzmán, Cortés's steward, died there attempting to bring him a horse. His death saddened everyone, for he was an honest and valiant man. The fighting was so confusing that two mares fell into the water; one survived, and the other was killed by the Indians, as they killed Guzmán's horse.

When the treasurer **Julián de Alderete** and his men assaulted a barricade, the Indians threw the heads of three Spaniards at them from a house, saying that they would do the same to them if the siege was not lifted. On seeing this and learning of the devastation I have related, the Spaniards retreated little by little. The **devil's** priests ascended some towers in Tlatelolco **where their gods were**, lit braziers, and burned copal as a sign of victory. Stripping naked some forty Spaniards, they cut open their chests and took out their hearts as an offering to their idols, spraying the air with blood. Our men wanted to go and avenge the cruelty,

since they could not stop it, but they were busy enough seeking shelter from the enemies' charge and pressure, for [their adversaries] feared neither horses nor swords. That day, forty Spaniards were **killed** [LdeG: captured] and sacrificed. More than thirty **Spaniards** were wounded, and Cortés suffered a leg wound. They also lost one cannon, **which was thrown into the water,** and three or four horses. Close to two thousand Indian allies friends, many of our canoes were lost, and the brigantines suffered losses; the captain and the master of one were wounded, and this captain died within eight days. Four Spaniards from Alvarado's camp also died.

It was a bitter day and a sorrowful night for our Spaniards and friends. The Mexica rejoiced that afternoon and evening with large **torches and** bonfires, and with many cries, drums, dances, banquets, and drinking sprees. They opened the streets and bridges as they had been before, placed guards on the towers and sentinels near the Spanish camps, and the next morning Quauhtemoc sent the heads of two Christians and two horses on display throughout the district as a sign of victory. He asked people to sever their friendship with the Spaniards, promising that he would soon destroy those who survived and deliver the land from war. At this, some provinces were encouraged and took up arms against Cortés's friends and allies, as Malinalco and Cuixco had done against **Coahuanahuac or Coauhnahuac.**[379] The news soon became known, and our side feared that the allied towns would rebel and **our** army mutiny, but God did not will it. The next day, Cortés came out to fight to show **the enemy** that the Spaniards were not weak. Turning back after the first bridge, **he faced some encounters and returned to camp, although he was to rest no longer.**

[Chapter 142]. The (f. 114v) Conquest of Malinalco, Matlatzinco, and Other Towns

Two days after this routing, the people of Cuernavaca **(**who had been his friends for many days**)** came to Cortés's camp saying that the peoples of Malinalco and Cuixco warred against them, destroying their bread and fruit and threatening to move against Cortés if the Spaniards aided them after their defeat. Although Cortés needed more aid than he could give, he promised them some Spaniards, both because they insisted and not to lose credit. Some of the Spanish **officers** were opposed, for they believed the army's ranks should not be reduced. He gave them eighty Spanish

379. Quauhnahuac, or Cuernavaca.

foot soldiers and ten horsemen with Andrés de Tapia as captain, urging him to wage the war well and swiftly. He gave Tapia ten days' leave to go and return. Tapia left, joined the people of Cuernavaca, found the enemy in a hamlet near Malinalco, and fought them in an open field. As they scattered, he followed them into their city, a large town with abundant water located atop a very steep hill that the horses could not climb. After felling the trees on the flatter areas, he turned back. This exploit was so successful that it freed their friends and frightened their enemies, who had gained courage, believing the Spaniards in decline. Two days after Tapia arrived from Cuernavaca, sixteen Otomi-speaking messengers arrived to complain about their neighbors, the lords of the province of Matlatzinco, who waged ruthless war on them, destroying their land, burning a town, and capturing its people. The lords came to Mexico intending to fight the Spaniards so that its residents could come out to kill them or break the siege. They asked Cortés to find a quick solution, as they were many and only twelve leagues away. Cortés believed them, since a few days before in battle (f. 115) the Mexica had threatened [to send in some forces from] Matlaltzinco.

Cortés sent Gonzalo de Sandoval with eighteen horses, one hundred foot soldiers, and many **Indian friends** from the [Otomi] sierra, who days before had been at the siege. He did this to show no weakness to his friends and enemies and to assist the former, for he well knew their complaints and the danger faced by those who went and those who stayed. Sandoval left, sleeping two nights in the devastated land of the Otomitl. He then came to a river forded by enemies carrying great booty from a town they had just torched. They fled when they saw Spaniards and horsemen, leaving much of the spoils behind. Crossing another river, **our men** reached a plain. Sandoval followed the enemies, finding bundles of clothing they could not carry, loads of centli **maize**, and children burned by the fire along the way. As he charged with his horses, the foot soldiers arrived, scattering them. They fled, and he pursued until he surrounded them three leagues from there in Matlatzinco. Two thousand died in the pursuit, and the city prepared its defenses while women and youths left, taking their belongings to a very high hill topped by a fortress of sorts. In the meantime, about seventy thousand of our friends entered **the town**, expelled its dwellers, looted, and burned it. It took all night, and the vanquished retreated to the hill. There was great wailing and screaming and an incredible noise coming from drums and horns until midnight, after which they abandoned the site. Sandoval led his army to the hill the next morning, but found **nothing** [LdeG: nobody], not even a trace of the enemy. He encountered a town at war with them, but the **town's** lord, putting down his weapons, surrendered and promised to

bring the people of **Matlatzinco**, Malinalco, and Cuixco peacefully. He delivered on his promise, for he later spoke to them and brought them to Cortés, who forgave them. They served him so well during the siege that King Quauhtemoc was greatly saddened.

[Chapter 143]. On Cortés's Determination to Lay Waste to Mexico

Seeing that the Spaniards were not fighting as well as before, Chichimecatl,[380] the Tlaxcalteca lord who furnished the wood for the brigantines and had been with Pedro de Alvarado since the war began, entered the city to do battle with only the men of his province **(**something never done before**)**. Shouting out the name of his lineage and city with many cries, he assailed and took a bridge. There he left four hundred (f. 115v) bowmen to follow the enemy, who fled on purpose so they could turn and seize him. A daring battle began, for they all fought fiercely and equally. Strong arguments were exchanged, and there were many dead and wounded on both sides; afterward they all ate [LdeG: very well]. The Mexica charged, hoping to seize Chichimecatl at the water crossing, but he went through surely with the help of the four hundred bowmen, who stopped their opponents and wounded their pride. The Mexica were humbled by the Tlaxcalteca's expedition and frightened by their daring. Even the Spaniards marveled at the ruse and their craftiness.

Since our men did not fight with their usual resolve, the Mexica believed they were cowards or in poor health, or perhaps hungry. One day, shortly before dawn, they moved secretly against Alvarado's camp, but the guards heard them and sounded the call to arms. The Spaniards came out on foot and on horseback, driving them off with their spears. Many drowned, others were wounded, and all were chastised. Afterward, the Mexica wished to speak with Cortés, and he went to a raised bridge to hear what they had to say. At times they called for a truce, other times for peace, and always they stressed that the Spaniards must leave their land. They did this to gauge our men's courage and to take advantage of a few days of truce to secure provisions, for they were committed to die for their country and their religion. Cortés responded that neither party was served well by a truce, but by peace, a good thing at all times. He would not forfeit it, even though he was the besieger and had plenty of provisions, while they should consider how much peace meant to them before their bread ran out, so they would not perish from hunger. As they had this discussion through the interpreter **Malintzin**, an old man

380. Chichimecatl was identified as Chichimecateuctli above.

climbed on the ramparts and in full view, calmly took from his backpack **or small sack** bread and other things that he ate, to let them know they did not want for anything, thus ending the conversation.

The siege dragged on for Cortés, as almost fifty days had passed and he had not been able to take Mexico. He marveled at the enemies' stamina in the skirmishes and combat. They wished neither for peace nor harmony, yet he knew how many thousands had been killed at the hand of their enemies, and how many by hunger and illness. He beseeched them to be his friends, lest he kill everyone **without distinction** by surrounding them on land and water so they would have no access to fruit, bread, or drink and be forced to eat each other. They responded, saying that the Spaniards would be the first to die, and the more [the Spaniards] attempted to frighten them, the more they would fight, and the more ruses they would devise. **On the orders of King Quauhtemoc**, they filled the square (f. 116) and the many streets with large stones so the horses could not run through and the Spaniards could not enter, and they walled the other streets with solid rock.

Although Cortés was reluctant to destroy so beautiful a city, he decided to demolish all the houses on the streets he took, using the rubble to close off all the **seized ditches and** channels. After consulting his captains, they all thought it a good plan, although laborious and time consuming. He communicated his plan to the Indian lords **and friends** in the army, who rejoiced **as one** with the news. Many farmers were brought in with wooden *huictles*[381] that are used as **sticks** [LdeG: shovels] and hoes, **or digging sticks and baskets to carry the fill.** Four days were spent **destroying houses**. As soon as his ditch diggers arrived, Cortés alerted his men and began **once again** to do battle on the street leading to the main square, although the city residents pretended they wanted peace. Delaying his action Cortés asked about the king, **where he was**. They answered that they had gone to call him, and **thus** Cortés waited an hour. After a while, they threw rocks, arrows, and sticks, dishonoring him. The Spaniards attacked **as soon as they saw this**, taking a large barricade and entering the square, where they removed the stones that obstructed the path of the horses. They blocked the water from the street in such a way that it never opened again. They demolished all the houses, leaving the entrance wide open and level and **then** returned to camp. Over the course of the next six days our men continued the same tasks without any harm, save for two horses wounded on the last day.

The following day Cortés prepared an ambush. He ordered Gonzalo de Sandoval to come with thirty of his and Alvarado's horses and

381. Nahuatl: *huictli*, "digging stick."

to assemble them with another twenty-five of Cortés's horses. Sending the brigantines ahead, Cortés and his men and thirty horses entered several large houses on the square. He fought the locals on many sides **with such drive that** before retreating **they trampled many Indians on their first charge**. As they passed the **large** house **where the ambush was set up**, they fired an escopeta, which was the signal for the ambush, **retreating after going by that house**. The Mexica came in with such vehemence and noise during the advance that they went far beyond the ambush point. Cortés **rushed** out with his thirty horsemen, shouting, "San Pedro **(who was his advocate)**, at them! Santiago, at them!" He inflicted many injuries, killing some, hurling others down, and cutting others off, who were then seized by the Indian friends. During the ambush, not counting those felled in combat, five hundred Mexica died, **the flower of Tlatelolco.** Many others were taken prisoner. Our Indian friends dined very well that night, for they could not be kept from eating human flesh. Some Spaniards climbed up a tower with idols, (f. 116v) opened a grave, and found gold objects worth about fifteen hundred castellanos. The deed so frightened the Mexica that they no longer screamed or shouted threats, nor did they dare remain in the square once our men left for fear of another attack. Finally, this was yet another reason for capturing Mexico.

[Chapter 144]. The Hunger and Ailments that the Mexica Courageously Endured

Two Mexica, **who must have been concerned citizens** driven by hunger, went at night furtively to Cortés's camp to tell him that their neighbors were dispirited and dying of hunger and disease. They piled up bodies inside the houses in order to conceal them, people fished at night in **the ditches that ran** between the houses, where the brigantines could not get to them, searched for firewood, and collected plants and roots to eat. Wishing to know more about this, Cortés had the brigantines surround the city. Before dawn, he and about fifteen horsemen and one hundred Spanish foot soldiers along with many other friends went there behind some houses, placing spies to give a signal when they saw anyone. At dawn, since many people came out looking for something to eat, with the signal given, Cortés slaughtered many. Eight hundred died there; women and youths and men who were poorly armed **or without weapons**. The brigantines also seized many men and fishing boats. The city guards heard the commotion, but the residents, **the Mexica**, alarmed to see Spaniards go about at such an unaccustomed hour, feared another

ambush and did not fight on the following day, which was the eve of Santiago [July 25], patron of Spain.

Cortés went in **with some of his men** to attack the city as usual, and he completed the capture of Tlacopan street, burning the **main** residences of Quauhtemoc **(who had left and gone to Tlatelolco),** which were large, strong, and encircled by water. With this, three out of the four quarters of Mexico were taken, and one could go safely from Cortés's encampment to Alvarado's, for all the houses seized had been demolished or burned. The Mexica told the Tlaxcalteca and the people from the other towns, "Go on! Go on! Hurry! Burn and destroy all the houses! As much as it grieves you, you will have to rebuild them at your own cost and effort. If we win, you will build them for us, and if we lose, you will build them for the Spaniards." Four days later, Cortés entered from his side, and Alvarado from his, who did all he could to secure two towers (f. 117) in Tlatelolco in order to constrain the enemies in that quarter, as his captain had done. Such were his efforts that in the end he captured them, although he lost three horses. The next day, the horsemen rode through the square while the enemies watched from their rooftops. Going about the city, they came upon piles of dead bodies in the houses and streets and floating in the water, as well as many gnawed roots and tree bark, with the men so wasted away and sallow that our Spaniards pitied them. Cortés attempted to negotiate with them, but although their bodies were weak, their hearts remained steadfast. They responded that he should not speak in friendship or expect spoils, as they would burn whatever they had or throw it into the water never to be seen again. They would die fighting to the last man.

Even as the gunpowder grew scarce, more arrows and pikes were made every day. In order to harm the enemies, or at least frighten them, a catapult was built and placed in the center of the square. Our Indians meant to intimidate the city residents with it, but the **master** carpenters had not constructed it properly, so all was in vain. The Spaniards dissembled by saying they did not want to inflict more damage. Since they took four days to build the catapult, they had not entered the city to fight. When they did so, they found the streets full of women, children, old men, and other wretches collapsing from hunger and disease. Cortés ordered his men not to harm these miserable people. The principales who were healthy stood on the rooftops unarmed and wearing mantas **(**a novel thing eliciting admiration**);** I think they were observing a holiday. [Cortés] demanded peace, but they responded evasively.

On another day, Cortés ordered Pedro de Alvarado to attack a neighborhood of about one thousand houses that he was close to taking, for he would assist him. The residents defended themselves well, but given

the fury and urgency of their opponents they eventually fled. Our side captured the entire neighborhood, killing twelve thousand residents. The slaughter was great because our Indian friends, who were so cruel and bloodthirsty, would leave no Mexica alive, despite our reprimands. After the loss of the neighborhood, the Mexica were cornered into the houses they held and barely fit standing up. The streets were so full of the dead and the sick that one could not avoid stepping on the bodies. Wishing to see what remained to be captured of the city, Cortés climbed a tower to have a look and guessed that only one of the eight parts was left.[382] The following day, he returned to attack that sector, ordering his men to kill only those who defended themselves. The Mexica, lamenting their misfortune, (f. 117v) begged the Spaniards to finish them off. When some nobles urgently called Cortés, he ran to them, believing they wanted an accord. He stood at the edge of a bridge and heard them exclaim, "Oh Captain Cortés, since you are a son of the sun, why not put out the sun so we are put to death? Oh Sun, you who can circle the earth in so brief a time as one day and night, kill us now, and deliver us from so great and prolonged a sorrow, for we wish to die and to go to rest with Quetzalcoatl, who awaits us!" Having said this, they cried and called their gods with great shouts. Cortés responded with what he thought appropriate, but they could not be dissuaded, and our Spaniards pitied them greatly.

[Chapter 145]. The Capture of Quauhtemoc

Seeing them in such dire straits, Cortés tried to make them surrender. He spoke with an uncle of don Fernando from Tetzcoco, who had been taken prisoner three days earlier and was still wounded. He asked him to negotiate peace with his king, but the nobleman at first refused, since he knew of Quauhtemoc's determination. In the end he said he would go, as he judged the affair honorable and good. The next day, Cortés entered [the city] with his men and sent the nobleman ahead with some Spaniards. The guards on the street welcomed and greeted him with due respect. He told the king of his mission. Angered, Quauhtemoc ordered him sacrificed and delivered his answer with arrows, stones, spears, and yells, saying they wished for death, not peace.

[The Mexica] fought mightily that day, wounding and killing many men and even a horse with a scythe that a Mexica had made from a Spanish sword. But if they killed many, even more of them were killed. The next day Cortés entered the city, not to fight but to await their surrender.

382. Tenochtitlan had four main subdivisions; this is the only section in the text that references eight parts of the city.

They, however, had no such intention. He arrived at a barricade and, on horseback, he spoke with some lords he knew, telling them that he could well **kill and** destroy them in a moment, but let them live out of pity, because he was fond of them. If they should surrender along with their lord, they would be received, treated well, and given something to eat. With his words, they wept. They responded they well knew their mistake and lamented their losses. However, they must obey their king and their gods, for they so willed it; he should wait for them there while they spoke with their lord Quauhtemoctzin. They departed, returning shortly to say that the lord would not come so late in the day, but that he would certainly be present the next day at the hour of the midday meal to speak with him in the square. (f. 118) Very pleased, Cortés returned to camp, believing they would meet [and] [LdeG: reach an accord]. He had the center of the square outfitted with a platform in the fashion of the Mexica lords and ordered provisions for the next day. Cortés arrived with a guard of many Spaniards, but the king did not appear; instead, begging illness as an excuse, he sent five leading principales to discuss an agreement. Cortés was sorry the king had not appeared, but he appreciated the lords' presence, believing their mediation would lead to peace. They ate and drank like starving men; taking food back with them, they promised to return at Cortés's insistence, who said that no settlement would be achieved without the king's presence.

They returned in two hours, bringing fine cotton mantas as gifts and saying the king refused to come, for he was ashamed and afraid. They left that night and returned the next day, asking Cortés to go to the marketplace, for Quauhtemoc wished to speak with him. He went and waited more than four hours, but the king never arrived. Seeing he had been duped, he sent Sandoval with the brigantines in one direction, and in the other he battled the streets and barricades held as strongholds by the enemy. Since he found little resistance, for they were without stones or arrows, he came and did as he wished. More than forty thousand people were slaughtered or imprisoned that day, and the Spaniards found it harder to keep their friends from killing than to do battle themselves, but they did not keep them from looting. The cries of women and children were so great it broke the Spaniards' hearts, and the stench of the dead bodies was so strong that they soon left.

That evening Cortés resolved to end the war the next day, and Quauhtemoc decided to flee, boarding a canoe with twenty oars. In the morning Cortés took his men and four cannons to the sector where their adversaries had been cornered. He ordered Pedro de Alvarado not to move until he heard an escopeta fired and Sandoval to proceed with the brigantines into a lake between the houses where all the boats of Mexico were kept

in order to search for the king without killing him. He told the others to push the enemy toward the brigantines. He ascended a tower and asked for the king, and **Tlacotzin** Cihuacoatl, **supreme president, or chief justice,** governor, and captain general, **who was called don Juan Velázquez when he became a Christian,** spoke with him, but he could not negotiate a surrender. Many Mexica continued to flee, most of them old men, youths, and women. Since they were numerous and in haste, they pushed one another and fell into the water, drowning. Cortés pleaded with the Indian lords to order their men to spare the miserable people, for they would surrender. Nevertheless, they could not prevent the killing and sacrificing of more than fifteen thousand Mexica. (f. 118v) Soon, there was a persistent rumor among the city's commoners that their lord wished to flee, and they themselves had no place to go, nor did they know where. They tried to board the boats, but since there was not enough room, some fell into the water and drowned, while others swam to safety.

The warriors were backed up against the walls of the rooftops concealing their disgrace, while the Mexica nobility and many others were in the canoes, as was the king. When Cortés had the escopeta fired, Pedro de Alvarado attacked from his side, and then the artillery fired into the corner where the adversaries were. They attacked with such speed that in a matter of moments they overcame everyone and everything. The brigantines split the fleet without any defense on their part; rather, they scattered wherever they could, lowering the royal standard. García Holguín,[383] captain of one of the brigantines, encountered a large canoe with twenty oars overloaded with people. One of his prisoners told him that these were the king's people and the king may be among them. He then chased and overtook the boat, not wanting to ram it. Instead, he had three crossbowmen at the ready. Quauhtemoc stood at the canoe's stern ready to fight, but when he saw the loaded crossbows, unsheathed swords, and the ship's advantage, he identified himself and surrendered. **García** Holguín, very satisfied with his prisoner, took him to Cortés, who received him as a king, smiling and drawing him near. Quauhtemoc then grasped Cortés's dagger, stating, "I have done everything in my power to defend myself and my people and what I was obliged to do in order to achieve my standing and place. Since you may now do what you will with me, it is best to kill me." Cortés consoled him with kind words, holding out hope for survival and a lordship. He took him to a rooftop, beseeching him to order his people to surrender. This he did; on seeing him those seventy thousand men put down their weapons.

383. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 202, states that Holguín later was challenged by Sandoval as to who really captured Quauhtemoc.

[Chapter 146]. On the Capture of Mexico

In this way, Hernando Cortés took Mexico Tenochtitlan on Tuesday, August 13, San Hipólito's day, in the year of 1521. To commemorate this enormous feat and triumph, each year on this day the residents hold a feast and procession, raising the standard under which the city was won. The siege, lasting three months, was lain by two hundred thousand men, nine hundred Spaniards, [LdeG: eighty horses], seventeen cannons, thirteen brigantines, and six thousand boats. On our side, up to fifty Spaniards died, along with six horses, and not too many Indian **allies**; on the other, one hundred thousand enemies died. Some say many more, (f. 119) but I do not count here those who died from hunger and pestilence. All the noble lords and principales fought to defend the city, and thus many people of high standing perished. They were many but ate little; they drank salt water, slept among the dead, and lived in constant stench. Because of this they fell ill, and a pestilence came upon them, killing an infinite number. Yet it also attested to their steadfastness and resolve, for although they were driven to eat branches and tree bark and drink brackish water, they never begged for peace. In the end, although they might have longed for it, Quauhtemoc did not. They first rejected peace against his will and counsel. Moreover, when they began dying, they showed no sign of weakness, as they kept the dead bodies in their houses so their enemies would not see them. From this we know that, although the Mexica eat human flesh, they do not eat their own, as some believe, for had they done so they would not have perished.

The Mexica women were often praised, not only because they remained with their husbands and fathers, but because they labored long, tending and healing the **sick** [LdeG: wounded] and making slings and crushing rocks to throw and fight from the rooftops, since they threw stones as well as their men. Mexico was sacked; the Spaniards took all the gold, silver, and feathers, and the Indians, the remaining spoils and belongings. Cortés had many large bonfires lit on the streets to celebrate and to dissipate the overwhelming stench. He buried the dead as best he could. With the king's mark, he branded many men and women as slaves, letting the rest go free. He beached the brigantines, leaving Villafuerte and eighty Spaniards as guards so the Indians would not set them on fire. Then he moved camp to Colhuacan,[384] where he thanked the friendly lords and towns for their assistance, promising to repay them and saying that any who wished to leave should go with God, for the war was over,

384. Surely Coyoacan is intended.

but he would summon them if it began again. Even so, almost all left wealthy and fully satisfied to have destroyed Mexico, made friends with the Spaniards, and remained in Cortés's good graces.

[Chapter 147]. Signs and Portents of the Destruction of Mexico

Shortly before Hernando Cortés's arrival in New Spain, there appeared for many nights a bright radiance over the sea from which he sailed. It shone two hours before dawn, drifted upward, and vanished. The Mexica saw flames in the east toward Veracruz and a thick column of smoke that seemed to reach the sky, horrifying them. At the same time, they saw armed men fighting each other in the air, (f. 119v) a new marvel for them that gave them something to fear and think about, for it was rumored that white men with beards would come to rule over the land during Moteuczoma's reign. The lords of Tetzcoco and Tlacopan became angered, saying that it was Moteuczoma's sword those people in the sky wielded and his costumes and clothing they wore. Moteuczoma placated them by pretending that the clothes and weapons belonged to his ancestors. So they would believe him, he had them try to break his sword. Since they could not or did not know how, they were left marveled and satisfied. It seems that, not long ago, several men from the coast had brought Moteuczoma a chest of clothing containing the sword and some gold rings and other of our items that they had found washed on shore by a storm. Others say that the lords, **Cacamatzin of Tetzcoco and Totoquihuaztli of Tlacopan,** lost their composure when they saw the clothing and the sword that Cortés sent Moteuczoma with Teudilli, as they noticed their similarity to the clothing and weapons of the men fighting in the sky. Whatever the truth, they realized they would be destroyed when the men with those weapons and clothing entered their land. The same year Cortés entered Mexico, a *malli*,[385] someone captured in battle in order to be sacrificed, had a vision as he lamented his misfortune and death through sacrifice. When he called to God in Heaven, he was told not to fear his death, for the God to whom he entrusted himself would grant him mercy. He should tell the priests and ministers of the idols that their sacrifice and shedding of human blood would soon cease, for those who would rule the land and proscribe such acts drew near. He was sacrificed in the center of Tlatelolco, where the gallows of Mexico now stand. Everyone listened to his words about the vision they called "the air of the sky." Later, on seeing angels depicted with wings and diadems, they said that they resembled the

385. Nahuatl: *malli*, "captive."

one who had spoken to the malli. Furthermore, the earth split open near Mexico in the year of [15]20, and huge fish leapt from the water, a strange sight to see. Some Mexica recounted that when Moteuczoma proudly returned from his victory at Xochnuchco,[386] he told the lord of Colhuacan that Mexico was now very safe and strong, for he had vanquished that and many other provinces, and no one was left to defeat him. "Do not be so sure, good king **(**the lord responded**),** for one act of force begets another." Moteuczoma, very upset by this rejoinder, looked upon that lord unfavorably. Nonetheless, when Cortés seized them both, he often recalled those prophetic conversations.

[Chapter 148]. How Quauhtemoc **and Other Lords** Were Tortured in Order to Reveal the Treasure **at Coyoacan**

(f. 120) Not all the gold in Mexico that our side first possessed was found, and no traces remained of Moteuczoma's famed treasure. The Spaniards were much aggrieved by it, for they thought to find great riches on capturing Mexico, or that they would at least recover what they had lost when they fled. Cortés was astonished that no Indian revealed the whereabouts of the gold and silver. The soldiers pressured the city residents to give them valuables, while the king's officials sought to locate all the gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, and jewelry to augment the king's fifth. However, they could not force the Mexica to reveal anything, although all exalted the treasure of their gods and kings. The Spaniards decided to torture Quauhtemoc, **called don Hernando after baptism, along with Tlacotzin Cihuacoatl, president, supreme governor and captain general, called don Juan Velázquez after baptism; Coanacochtzin, former lord of Tetzcoco and called don Pedro de Alvarado after baptism; Tetlepanqueçatl, former lord of Tlacopan and called don Pedro after baptism; Oquicique,**[387] **former lord of Azcapotzalco and called don Carlos after baptism; Motelchiuhtzin Huiznauatl,**[388] **a Mexica captain called don Andrés after baptism; and another noble, who was the king's favorite.**

The noble suffered great torment, yet, although he died from torture by fire, he did not respond to the questions posed to him about the treasure, either because he had no knowledge of it or because he guarded his

386. Soconusco (and hereinafter). Gerhard, *Southeastern Frontier*, 165–66, states that "the area was probably coterminal with the Aztec tributary province of Xoconochco." He adds that it was later a large zone that included the Pacific drainage of Chiapas and a small part of Guatemala.

387. Oquitzin (and hereinafter).

388. Or Huitznahuatl.

lord's secret with utmost loyalty. As he was being burned, the nobleman glanced at the king so he would take pity on him and grant him license to disclose what he knew. Quauhtemoc angrily returned his look, disparaging him as soft and a man of little strength, asking whether perchance he himself was enjoying a bath or a similar delight. Cortés put an end to Quauhtemoc's torture, as it seemed to him a cruel affront, or perhaps because Quauhtemoc told him that ten days before his capture, he had thrown all the pieces of artillery, gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, and rich jewels into the lake because the devil revealed that he would be vanquished. During Cortés's residencia, he was accused of carrying out Quauhtemoc's death as an evil act and unworthy of a king's stature, and because he was greedy and cruel. So the truth be known, Cortés defended himself, saying that the torture was done at the petition of the royal treasurer, Julián de Alderete. Additionally, everyone said Cortés had kept all of Moteuczoma's riches and that he did not wish to continue torturing Quauhtemoc so that this fact would be concealed. Because of what Quauhtemoc said, many searched for the treasure in the lake and on land, but it was never found. It is noteworthy to have hidden so much gold and silver without ever acknowledging it.

[Chapter 149]. The Royal Fifth and Service from the Spoils of Mexico

When the spoils of Mexico were melted down, they yielded 130,000 castellanos, which were distributed according to each man's service and merits. The royal fifth amounted to 26,000 castellanos, and included many slaves, featherwork, fans, cotton and feather mantas, and small wicker shields (f. 120v) covered with tiger skin and feathers and encircled and crowned in gold. There were also many pearls, some like hazelnuts, but darker, since they burn the shells to remove them, and even to eat the flesh. They tributed the emperor with many precious stones, among them a square emerald as smooth as the palm of one's hand and finished in a point like a pyramid. He also received a superb table service in gold and silver with cups, jars, dishes, platters, pots, and other cast pieces, some resembling birds, and others in the shape of fishes, animals, fruits, and flowers, all so lifelike that there was much to admire. They gave an abundance of bracelets, earrings, rings, lip plugs, gold and silver blowguns, and other jewelry for men, women, and some idols, all together worth 150,000 ducats, although some say twice that. They sent besides many mosaic masks made of small fine stones, with gold ears and bone fangs over their lips, much clothing worn by their priests, loincloths,

altar curtains, altar coverings, and other temple ornaments, all made of feather, cotton, and rabbit fur. They sent some bones of giants found in Colhuacan and three tigers; one broke loose aboard ship and mauled six or seven men, killing two, and then jumped into the sea. They killed the other **two** so they would not do the same. More items were shipped, but these were the most significant.

Many [Spaniards] sent money to their relatives. Cortés sent 4,000 ducats to his parents with his secretary Juan de Rivera. The amount was delivered by the procuradores of Mexico, Alonso de Ávila and Antonio de Quiñones, in three caravels, but the two loaded with the gold were captured shortly beyond the Azores by the French corsair Florin, who also took a ship that came from the islands[389] with 72,000 ducats, 600 marcos' worth of seed pearls and pearls, and 2,000 arrobas of sugar. The cabildo wrote to the emperor, praising Cortés, while he pleaded on behalf of the conquerors for the confirmation of their repartimientos and asked that an educated and inquisitive person be sent to see the many and marvelous lands he had conquered. Cortés also requested that the emperor agree to call this land New Spain. He asked him to send bishops, priests, and friars to attend to the conversion of the Indians, along with farmers bringing animals, plants and seeds, and that he not grant passage to renegades, physicians, or lawyers.

[Chapter 150]. How Cazoncin,[390] King of Michoacan, Surrendered to Cortés

Everyone was very frightened and surprised by the destruction of Mexico, the greatest and strongest city in all the land and the most powerful one in dominion and riches. Not only did the subjects of the Mexica pledge themselves to Cortés but also to their enemies in order to avoid a war like that waged with Quauhtemoc. Therefore, the ambassadors of great (f. 121) and numerous distant provinces came to Colhuacan, and they say that some came from more than three hundred leagues away. The king of Michoacan, who went by the name of Cazonzi[391] **and was called don Antonio after his baptism,** a grand lord and an old and natural enemy of the Mexica kings, sent his ambassadors to Cortés to rejoice at the victory and pledge his friendship. Cortés received them well, and they stayed for four days. Jousts on horseback were held so they would tell of them when they returned. He gave them baubles, along with two

389. A likely reference to islands in the Caribbean.
390. Cazonzi (and hereinafter). Cazonzi is the title of a Phurépecha ruler.
391. LdeG uses the title Caçon rather than the personal name Cazonzi.

Spaniards who were to inspect the kingdom of Michoacan and obtain information about the South Sea,[392] and then bid them farewell.

The ambassadors spoke so much about the Spaniards to the king that he almost came to meet them, but his advisers stopped him. He sent instead one of his brothers with one thousand retainers and many noblemen. Cortés received and treated him with due respect, taking him to see the brigantines and the destroyed city of Mexico.

The Spaniards paraded in formation, firing escopetas and crossbows. The artillery shot at a target atop a tower while the horseman rode and skirmished with spears. The visiting noble marveled at the display and the Spaniards' beards and outfits. He departed four days after his arrival, having much to relate to his brother, the king. Cortés, seeing Cazonzi's disposition, sent Cristóbal de Olid with forty men on horseback and one hundred Spanish foot soldiers to establish a settlement in Chincicila[393] **in Michoacan**. Pleased about the settlement, Cazonzi gave them much feather [LdeG: and cotton] clothing, 5,000 pesos of base gold mixed with silver, and 1,000 marcos of silver in an amalgam with copper, all this in decorative and personal jewelry. He also pledged himself and his kingdom to the king of Castile, as Cortés beseeched him.

Tzintzuntzan is the head and principal city of Michoacan and located little more than forty leagues from Mexico in the foothills near a freshwater lake as large as Mexico's with many good fish. Besides this lake, the kingdom has many others with great fisheries, for which it is called Michoacan, meaning "Place of Fish."[394] It has many springs used as baths, some too hot for a hand to be dipped into them. The land has warm weather and good winds; it is so wholesome that many sick people from other parts go there for cures. It abounds in bread, fruit, and vegetables with much game, beeswax, and cotton. The men are strong and more handsome than their neighbors, able workers, and excellent bowmen with great aim, particularly those called Teochichimeca, who are south of or near that kingdom. If the Teochichimeca fail at the hunt, they are made to wear a woman's article of clothing called *cueitl*, "skirt," as an affront. They are warriors and men of skill who always fought against the Mexica and remarkably never lost a battle. In this kingdom there are many mines of silver and base gold. The richest silver mine (f. 121v) ever seen in New Spain was discovered there in the year of 1525. For this reason the king and his officials claimed it, not without aggravating the man

392. LdeG uses the idiom, *tomar lengua del mar del sur*, which could also mean "to bring back an interpreter of the language of the South Sea."

393. Chincicila is a corruption of Tzintzuntzan (and hereinafter), the name of the Phurépecha capital.

394. Literally, "Place of Owners of Fish."

who discovered it. Yet God willed the mine's depletion, thus the owner lost the mine, the king his fifth, and his officials their reputation. There are many good salt beds, plentiful black stone[395] for making knives, very fine jet, and an excellent grade of cochineal is harvested. The Spaniards have planted mulberry trees for silk, sown wheat, and raised livestock, and as everything grows so well, Francisco de Terrazas harvested six hundred fanegas from four that he planted.

[Chapter 151]. The Conquest of Tochtepec and Coatzacoalco by Gonzalo de Sandoval

When Mexico [Tenochtitlan] rebelled and expelled the Spaniards, all the towns on their side also rose up and slaughtered the Spaniards who were looking for mines and other secrets, but the war in Mexico impeded any punishment. Since the culprits were from Huatuxco, Tochtepe**que**c,[396] and other places on the coast, in late October 1521 Cortés sent Gonzalo de Sandoval from Colhuacan with two hundred Spanish foot soldiers, thirty-five horsemen, and a substantial army of friends that included some Mexica lords. On arriving in Huatuxco, the entire land surrendered. Sandoval established a settlement in Tochtepec, which is 120 leagues from Mexico, calling it Medellín by order of Cortés and to honor him, since that is the name of his birthplace. After Tochtepec, Sandoval went to establish another settlement on the Río Coatzacoalcos, believing that its inhabitants were Cortés's friends, as they had promised Diego de Ordaz, who had been there when Moteuczoma still lived. These people neither welcomed him nor showed him any friendship when he told them he was coming on Cortés's behalf to see if they had need of anything. They replied that they had no need for Spaniards or their friendship and that he should go with God. He asked their permission to respond and beseeched them in the name of peace and the Christian faith, but they would have none of it, taking up their weapons instead and threatening to kill him. Sandoval did not wish for war, but having no alternative he raided a town at night and took a noblewoman hostage so our men could reach the river without opposition and take the Río Coatzacoalcos and its banks. Sandoval founded Villa del Espíritu Santo four leagues from the sea, as they had not found a good site closer to it. He secured the friendship of many towns that were given in encomienda to the

395. Obsidian.

396. Huatusco and Tuxtepec in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 299–300. Gerhard, *Guide*, 83–84, has a Cuauhtochco, which was a large tributary province of the Aztecs that stretched from Pico de Orizaba to the gulf coastal plain.

founders of Espíritu Santo with documents from Cortés, as well as the towns of Quechollan, Cihuatlan, Quezaltepec, and Tabasco, which later rebelled. At this time, Huaxacac[397] and a large section of the province of Mixtecapan were conquered because they waged war against the people of Tepeaca and their allies. Many of their people died in the course of three battles before surrendering and allowing our men to establish themselves in their land.

[Chapter 152]. The Conquest of Tutepec[398]

Cortés wished to have land and ports on the South Sea in order to (f. 122) explore the coast of New Spain and find some islands rich in gold, precious stones, pearls, spices, and other admirable and unexpected things. He also wanted to reroute the spice trade from the Malucos[399] with less effort and danger, since he learned about that sea while Moteuczoma was alive. The people of Michoacan offered their assistance, and Cortés sent four Spaniards along two roads with **new** [LdeG: good] guides to Tehuantepec, Zacatallan,[400] and other towns. They took possession of this sea and the land by planting crosses. They stated their mission to the natives, asking them for gold, pearls, and men to show their captain, and returned to Mexico. Cortés treated those Indians very well, giving them some gifts and many good wishes and promises for their king, and with this they happily took their leave. The lord of Tehuantepec then sent a gift of gold, cotton, feathers, and weapons, pledging himself and his state[401] to the emperor. Shortly thereafter, he asked for Spaniards and horses to go against the people of Tututepec, who attacked him for having surrendered to the Christians and showing them the way to the sea. To help him, Cortés sent Pedro de Alvarado in the year of [15]22 **(**not [15]23**)** with two hundred Spaniards, forty horsemen, and two small field cannons. Alvarado traveled through Oaxaca, which had already been pacified, taking a month to reach Tututepec. He encountered initial resistance in some of the towns. The lord of this province received him well. He attempted to lodge [Alvarado] in the great city of Tututepec in some of his own houses, which were quite good, although with thatched roofs,

397. Now known (and hereinafter) as Oaxaca and the Mixteca.
398. Tututepec hereinafter. Gerhard, *Guide*, 148–49, locates a Tototepec in the modern state of Guerrero and states that there was a Mexica garrison located there. He adds that an independent kingdom of the same name also may have served as a buffer state.
399. Moluccas (and hereinafter).
400. Zacatula (and hereinafter) in Gerhard, *Guide*, 393.
401. This would be a native polity.

for he intended to set the Spaniards on fire that night. Nevertheless, as Alvarado either suspected or was warned, he did not wish to stay in [the houses], arguing that it would not be good for his horses. He stayed in the lower part of the city and took the lord and even his son as hostages. They were later ransomed for 25,000 gold castellanos, as this land is rich in markets, mines, and some pearls.

Alvarado founded a settlement in Tututepec, and called it Segura. It was to there he moved the residents of the other Segura de la Frontera, who no longer had any enemies. With letters from Cortés, he gave them several provinces in encomienda, including Coaztlahuac and Tachquianco.[402] Alvarado returned [to Mexico] to negotiate the affairs of the new town with Cortés. In his absence, the residents left the town due to conflicts among themselves and raided Oaxaca. Cortés sent his alcalde mayor Diego de Ocampo to lead an investigation. Ocampo sentenced one of the residents to death, but during the appeal process Cortés changed the sentence to banishment instead. Meanwhile, the lord of Tututepec died, and some of the towns in the region rose up in arms. Pedro de Alvarado returned to the town to fight, and although several Spaniards and Indian friends were killed, he subjected them once again. However, Segura was not resettled.

[Chapter 153]. The War at Coliman[403]

As soon as Cortés found a passage and friendly people on the coast of the South Sea, he sent forty Spanish carpenters and sailors to Zacatullan, or Zacatula as they now say, to build two brigantines to explore the coast and find the strait (f. 122v) they then thought existed, as well as two caravels to travel to the Moluccas and look for islands with spices and precious stones. He sent after them iron, anchors, sails, rope, and much rigging and gear that they kept in Veracruz, as well as many men and women. The road was long and the cost enormous. Cortés later sent Cristóbal de Olid to inspect the ships and reconnoiter the coast as soon as they were built. Olid traveled from Tzintzuntzan to Zacatula with more than one hundred Spaniards, forty horsemen, and some people from Michoacan. Along the way, he learned that the **people** [LdeG: towns] of Colima were quite wealthy and up in arms. Attacking them, he fought for many days, but in the end was defeated and

402. We have not been able to identify these two towns.

403. Colima (and hereinafter). Gerhard, *Guide*, 78, notes that the region of Colima was generally well populated. It was situated well to the north and west of Mexico City and along the Pacific coast, and presented considerable resistance to the Spaniards.

humbled, for the people of Colima killed three Spaniards and a large number of his friends.

Cortés dispatched Gonzalo de Sandoval with twenty-five horsemen, seventy foot soldiers, and many Indian friends and porters to avenge [Olid] and punish the people of Impiltzinco[404] for waging war **on their neighbors** because they were the Spaniards' [LdeG: Christians'] friends. Sandoval went to Impiltzinco, fought several times, but could not conquer them because the terrain was too rough for the horses. He left for Zacatula, inspected the ships, picked up more Spaniards, and traveled seventy leagues to Colima, pacifying some towns along the way. Thinking they would win once again, the people of Colima confronted him at the same pass where they had defeated Olid. Both sides fought furiously, but our men prevailed, although many men and horses were wounded; none died, however, other than Indians. I always mention dead or wounded horses because of their great importance in these wars, as victory was gained most often through them, and they were quite expensive. The people of Impiltzinco were so devastated by the battle that without waiting for another they became subjects of the emperor, forcing the surrender of Colimantlec, Cihuatlan, and other towns. Colima was settled by twenty-five horsemen and one hundred and twenty foot soldiers, among whom Cortés divided up the land. Sandoval and his companions brought back news that a rich island inhabited by Amazons was located at a distance of ten days' travel. Nonetheless, no such women were ever found, and I believe this misunderstanding was caused by the [place] name Cihuatlan, which means "Land or Place of Women."

[Chapter 154]. About Cristóbal de Tapia, Who Went to Mexico as Governor

Cristóbal de Tapia, inspector of Santo Domingo, went to Mexico shortly after it was won, as governor of New Spain. He arrived in Veracruz and presented the decrees he brought with him, expecting to find support from Diego Velázquez's friends and because the bishop of Burgos had sent him.[405] He was told the decrees would be obeyed, but that their execution would have to be carried out by the villa's residents and regidores, who were busy with the rebuilding (f. 123) of Mexico and other conquests. [The residents and regidores] would do what was most convenient for the service of the emperor, their lord and king. Tapia grew

404. We are unable to locate this polity.

405. Later identified as Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, governor of the Indies; see Chapter 167.

angry and suspicious with the response. He wrote to Cortés and set out shortly for Mexico. Cortés responded that he looked forward to his visit, given the good fellowship and friendship they had shared in the past. He was sending fray Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, commissary of the [Holy] Crusade, to inform [Tapia] about the state of the Spaniards and the land, since [Urrea] had been present at the siege of Mexico. Cortés instructed the friar as to what to do, stipulating that Tapia be well provided for along the way. However, so Tapia would not reach Mexico, Cortés decided **to go** to meet him on the road, once he had finished preparing his expedition to Pánuco. Because the captains and procuradores of all the villas in the region would not allow Cortés to leave, he sent powers of attorney to Gonzalo de Sandoval, Pedro de Alvarado, Diego de Soto, Diego de Baldenebro,[406] and fray Pedro Melgarejo, who were already in Veracruz, to negotiate with Tapia. Together, they forced Tapia to turn back to Cempoala. When he presented his decrees once again, they appealed to the emperor for confirmation, saying that this suited His Majesty's service, the well-being of the conquerors, and the pacification of the land. They even told him that the decrees were biased and false, and he, Tapia, incapable and unworthy of so great an office.

Aware of the many contradictions and threats, Cristóbal de Tapia went back where he had come from, profoundly affronted, or perhaps because he had been bribed. Moreover, the Audiencia and governor of Santo Domingo attempted to take away his post, because he had gone to create a disturbance in our [*sic*] Spain, where he had been expressly forbidden to go under pain of severe punishment. Juan Bono de Quexo[407] **also** [LdeG: soon] left; having sailed with Narváez as shipmaster with dispatches from the bishop of Burgos for Cristóbal de Tapia. He brought one hundred letters with the same message and blank ones signed by the same bishop, with promises to those who welcomed Tapia as governor and claimed the emperor was not being served well by Cortés. He also brought a letter offering Cortés many favors if he ceded the land to Cristóbal de Tapia, and opposition if he did not. Many people were disturbed by these letters that proffered so much, and if Tapia had not left there would have been serious repercussions. Some said that a [revolt of the] community[408] was not unlikely, since one occurred in Toledo. However,

406. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 247. Baldenebro was one of Cortés's stalwarts through the campaign.

407. Ibid., 170. Bono de Quexo reportedly served as Colón's pilot on his fourth voyage. He was notorious as a slave raider and opportunist, serving Velázquez, Cortés, Tapia, and others.

408. LdeG uses comunidad, although this may be a reference to the 1520–21 *comunero* rebellion in central Spain.

Cortés dealt with the affair wisely and diplomatically. Yet these events caused the Indians to change their behavior, and the Cuexteca and the peoples of Coatzacoalco, Tabasco, and other towns rebelled, but paid dearly for it.

[Chapter 155]. The War at Pánuco

The lord of Pánuco had pledged himself to the service the emperor and his friendship toward the Christians before Moteuczoma **was killed** [LdeG: died] and Mexico destroyed. At the time of Tapia's arrival, Cortés wanted to establish settlements along the Río Pánuco, because [the people] told him it was good for ships and a source of gold and silver. He was motivated by the desire to avenge the Spanish men of Francisco de Garay, who had been killed there, but he also wished to preempt Garay's conquest and settlement of that river and coast, since it was known that he hoped to become governor of Pánuco and was raising an army. Cortés had written Castile long before requesting the jurisdiction of Pánuco, (f. 123v) and now its people asked for Spaniards to go against their enemies, begging forgiveness for the deaths of some of Garay's soldiers and for those of the men shipwrecked there on the way to Veracruz. For this reason, Cortés journeyed there with three hundred Spanish foot soldiers, one hundred and fifty horsemen, and forty thousand Mexica. He fought with the enemy in Ayotuxtetlatlan, and since it was an open, level field, he made good use of the horses, winning a swift victory and slaughtering the natives. Many Mexica died, and fifty Spaniards and some horses were wounded. During the four days Cortés remained there to care for the wounded, many towns in the Pánuco alliance submitted to him and brought gifts.

Cortés went to Chila,[409] five leagues from the coast, where Francisco de Garay was defeated, and from where he dispatched messengers throughout the region beyond the river, beseeching [the natives] to accept peace and evangelization. They did not listen to his pleas, petitions, or offers of friendship, for they were many and had fortified positions around their lakes. Perhaps they planned to kill and eat Cortés's men, as they had done with Garay's men. Instead, they killed some of the messengers, uttering fierce threats against the man who sent them. Cortés waited fifteen days to deal with them peacefully, only attacking them afterward. He could not inflict damage on land, as they remained on the lakes. Thus, he changed course, finding boats and crossing the river

409. Gerhard, *Guide*, 215, lists many Chilas, but states that there was a Chila located southeast of Pánuco.

at night with one hundred foot soldiers and forty horsemen so as not to be detected. At daylight, upon seeing him, so many natives charged with such fury that the Spaniards never saw any Indians in this land do battle in the field with such abandon. The Indians killed two horses and inflicted serious wounds on ten; nevertheless, they were defeated, chased for a league, and died in large numbers. Our men spent the night in a deserted town where they found the weapons and clothing of Garay's Spaniards hanging in the temples, their bearded faces flayed, cured, and attached to the walls. Some were recognized and mourned, as they certainly warranted pity. The people of Pánuco seemed to be as violent and cruel as the Mexica said, for [the latter] had experienced similar barbarities in the course of their combat with them.

Cortés then journeyed to a beautiful town, where many waited armed as if in ambush to take the Spaniards one on one in their houses. But the horsemen at the vanguard saw them. Once discovered, the Indians emerged and fought so bravely that they killed one horse and injured twenty, along with many Spaniards. They were tenacious, and the battle lasted for a long time. They were pushed back three or four times, but regrouped with admirable coordination. Forming a circle, they dropped to their knees and threw spears, arrows, and stones without a word, an unusual practice for Indians. When they grew tired, they went into a river nearby, crossing it slowly, and their leaving did not trouble Cortés. They reached the opposite bank, remaining there in good spirits until nightfall. Our men returned to town, (f. 124) ate the dead horse, and slept under vigilant guard. The following day, the Spaniards searched the countryside and found four deserted towns with many earthen jars for wine stored orderly in cellars. Because of their horses, they slept in a maize field and traveled for two more days, but, finding no one, returned to camp at Chila. None of the Indians on the other side of the river spoke with the Spaniards or waged war on them. Disappointed, in order to provoke them to do one or the other, Cortés had numerous horses, Spaniards, and Indian friends cross the river to attack a large town located on the shore of a lake. At night, they assailed it by land and water, wreaking havoc. The Indians, surprised at being attacked by water and at night, began to surrender. Within twenty-five days the entire region and the residents along the riverbanks had lain down their arms.

Cortés founded Santi Esteban del Puerto near Chila, where he posted one hundred foot soldiers and thirty horsemen. He distributed those provinces among them and named alcaldes, regidores, and other cabildo officials, leaving Pedro de Vallejo as lieutenant. He laid waste to Pánuco, Chila, and other large towns due to their rebelliousness

and cruelty against Garay's men and returned to Mexico, which was being rebuilt. Since there were no spoils, this expedition cost 60,000 pesos, and horseshoes were sold for their weight in gold, or for twice that in silver. A vessel from Veracruz loaded with provisions and ammunition for Cortés's army was shipwrecked, and only three Spaniards made their way to an islet five leagues from the coast. They survived for many days on some type of fig and even on sea lions that came on land to sleep.

At this time, Tututepec of the north rebelled with many other towns bordering Pánuco. Their lords burned and destroyed more than twenty towns that were friends with the Christians. Cortés attacked and conquered them, but they killed many Indian [allies] who lagged behind, and twelve of their sorely needed horses were ridden to death in the sierras. The lord of Tututepec and the captain general of that war were hanged because, having sworn their friendship, they rebelled and, although forgiven once, had not kept their word and promises. Two hundred of these men were auctioned as slaves in order to pay for the loss of the horses. After the lord's execution and the appointment of his brother as successor, the people were rendered peaceful subjects.

[Chapter 156]. How Francisco de Garay Went to Pánuco with a Large Fleet

As has been said, Francisco de Garay went to Pánuco in the year of [15]18, when he was defeated by the people of Chila, who ate the Spaniards they killed and placed their flayed skins in their temples as mementos or offerings. He then returned with more people the following year, as some say, but was driven from the river once again. He sought to be appointed governor of Pánuco to protect his reputation and to have the riches of the region. He sent Juan López (f. 124v) de Torralba to Castile with a report about his discoveries and their cost, which secured his post as adelantado and governor in Pánuco. In this capacity in the year of [15]23 he outfitted nine ships and two brigantines to transport one hundred and forty-four horses, eight hundred and fifty Spaniards, and some islanders from Jamaica, where he furnished the fleet with many cannons, two hundred escopetas, and three hundred crossbows. Since Garay was wealthy, he provisioned his fleet with an abundance of meat, bread, and merchandise. He quickly plotted a town called Garay and appointed Alonso de Mendoza and Fernández de Figueroa as alcaldes; Gonzalo de Ovalle, Diego de Cifuentes, and a certain Villagrán as regidores; as well as other men as alguacil, escribano, *fiel*, "inspector of weights and mea-

sures," procurador, and all the other posts requisite for a Castilian villa. He took their oath of office and made the captains in his army swear they would never turn against or leave him, and then left [for] Jamaica around the feast day of San Juan [June 24].

Upon his arrival at Xagua,[410] a very good port in Cuba, [Garay's] sorrow and fear were great when he learned that Cortés had conquered Pánuco and established settlements there. In order to avoid the fate of Pánfilo de Narváez, he thought to reach an agreement with Cortés and wrote to Diego Velázquez and Licenciado Alonso Zuazo about his concerns, asking the latter to travel to Mexico and represent him in his dealings with Cortés. Pleased to do so, Zuazo went to Xagua, spoke with Garay, and each set out to pursue his own business. Zuazo encountered a storm and reached New Spain with great effort. Garay also faced heavy rains, arriving at Río Palmas on the feast of Santiago [June 25]. He had all his ships drop anchor because it was all he could do. Garay sent his relative Gonzalo de Ocampo[411] upriver aboard a brigantine to observe the layout, people, and towns of that **land and** riverbank. Ocampo went fifteen leagues upriver, noticing its many tributaries, and returned after four days to report that the land was poor and deserted. They believed him, although he had no knowledge of what he spoke.

Garay had four hundred men disembark with the horses and ordered the ships to travel alongside Juan de Grijalva, following the coast toward Pánuco in battle formation. As for Garay, he traveled for three days through uninhabited territory, traversing difficult swamps. He swam and used boats to cross a river he named Montrito [LdeG: Montalto], because it descends from high sierras. He entered a large, uninhabited city with an abundance of maize and guava trees. He circled a large lake, captured a few men from Chila who spoke some Castilian, and sent them as messengers to a town so he would be received in peace. The locals gave Garay lodging, bread, fruit, and the fowl they capture on the lakes; his soldiers almost mutinied because they were not allowed to sack the town. They crossed a cresting river in which eight horses drowned. Unwittingly, they found themselves in swamps and would not have escaped had they been surrounded by warriors. The Spaniards finally reached dry

410. Or Sagua.

411. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 98–99, 368, states that Diego Ocampo, from Trujillo, Spain, was apparently the brother of Gonzalo Ocampo, of Cáceres, Spain. Diego joined Cortés in Cuba, and they became good friends. He was later rewarded amply with encomiendas in New Spain. In 1523, he was elected alcalde mayor in Mexico City. Gonzalo Ocampo was in Santo Domingo by 1502, where he engaged in a variety of business enterprises. In New Spain, he served as chief of staff, or lieutenant, to Garay, an Ocampo relative, and was elected regidor in Mexico in 1524.

land after enduring hunger, hardship, as well as mosquitoes, ticks, and bats that were eating them alive.

With great anticipation, they arrived at Pánuco, but found nothing to eat because of the wars Cortés had fought previously, or, as they thought, because their adversaries had taken all the provisions with them to the other side of the river. Since the ships bringing (f. 125) provisions were nowhere in sight, the soldiers scattered to search for food and clothing. Garay sent Gonzalo de Ocampo to Santi Esteban del Puerto to inquire about the intentions of Cortés's men. He returned, saying they were favorable, and thus they could go there. But either they deceived him or he was deceived and in turn deceived Garay, who became closer than he should have to his adversaries. To curry the favor of the Indians, Garay told them he had come to punish Cortés's soldiers for causing them anger and harm. Knowing the terrain, Cortés's men left Santi Esteban surreptitiously and surprised Garay's horsemen at the large town of Nachapalan.[412] They captured Captain Alvarado with another forty men because they had usurped the land and stolen clothing, causing Garay to suffer insult and injury. He began to fear Cortés's good fortune on losing four ships, even though the other ships had dropped anchor at the mouth of the Río Pánuco.[413] [Garay] sent word to Pedro de Vallejo, Cortés's lieutenant, that he was coming to establish settlements with powers of attorney and the emperor's license and to return his men and horses to him. Vallejo asked to see the documents in order to believe him. He ordered the shipmasters to bring Garay's ships into port to prevent their being damaged by storms as before, saying he would regard them as pirates if they did not obey. However, Garay and his men retorted that they would not comply simply because [Vallejo] had requested it, but would do what best suited them.

[Chapter 157]. The Death of Adelantado Francisco de Garay

Pedro de Vallejo notified Cortés about the arrival of Garay's fleet and what had transpired, so he would send back in good time companions, ammunition, and advice. As soon as the news reached Cortés, he halted his preparation of the fleets that were to travel to Las Higueras, Chiapas, and Guatemala and, although he had injured an arm, readied himself to go to Pánuco. When he was about to depart, Francisco de las Casas and

412. Nochapalán in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 309.

413. LdeG states earlier that Garay reached the Río de las Palmas, but then explains that Grijalva sailed, hugging the shore, all the way to Pánuco. Therefore, he is correct in stating that the expedition has now reached the Río Pánuco.

Rodrigo de Paz arrived with letters from the emperor and the decrees on the governance of New Spain and all he conquered, Pánuco in particular. Therefore, in his stead Cortés sent the decree with his alcalde mayor Diego de Ocampo and Pedro de Alvarado, with many men. Garay and [Ocampo][414] argued with one another; Garay stated that Pánuco was his because the king had granted it to him, while [Ocampo] refuted his claim, saying the king forbade his entry, for Cortés had settled Pánuco already and such was the custom of the Indies. In the meantime, Garay's men suffered, coveting the riches and bounty of their adversaries and perishing at the hands of the Indians, while their vessels were eaten by shipworms and endangered by storms. For these reasons, or of their own accord, two of Garay's shipmasters—Martín de San Juan of Guipúzcoa, and a certain Castromocho—met secretly with Pedro de Vallejo to surrender their ships. Vallejo then ordered Grijalva to drop anchor in port or to depart, following naval protocol. Grijalva responded with artillery shots; however, since the escribano Vicente López repeated the order and Grijalva saw the other ships enter through the river, he moored the flagship in port. Vallejo arrested Grijalva, but [Ocampo] later released him, taking possession of his ships, and went to overcome and disarm Garay.

Presenting his royal decree to legitimize his claims, Garay asked for his ships and men, (f. 125v) as he wished to settle the region of the Río Palmas. He complained that Gonzalo de Ocampo misled him about the river and that the army captains and councilmen had not allowed him to disembark and settle the river as he wished in order to avert an escalation with Cortés, who was both prosperous and well regarded. Diego de Ocampo, Pedro de Vallejo, and Pedro de Alvarado persuaded [Garay] to either write Cortés accepting his terms or go settle Las Palmas, for the area was as promising as Pánuco. They would return his ships and men, provisioning him with food and weapons. Garay accepted the decision and wrote to Cortés, and it was proclaimed that all his men should board their ships under pain of flogging, for the foot soldiers, and loss of arms and horses, for the rest, and that those who had brought weapons should return them.

On hearing this, [Garay's] soldiers protested and refused to comply. His army's ranks were depleted because some went into the hinterland and were killed by Indians, others hid, and yet others excused themselves by saying that the ships were eaten by worms and rotting. They claimed they had no obligation to follow Garay beyond Pánuco, nor did they

414. Ovando in the original; surely the copyist's error on three occasions in this paragraph.

wish to starve, as had some in their company. Garay beseeched them not to abandon him, promising many things and reminding them of their oaths. His words fell on deaf ears, for many who went to sleep at dusk were not there at dawn, and he lost up to fifty men in a single night. Desperate, Garay sent Pedro Cano and Juan Ochoa with letters to Cortés entrusting him with his life and honor and seeking resolution. He left for Mexico as soon as an answer arrived. Cortés ordered his men to give him provisions along the way and had him lodged comfortably.

After many complaints and excuses, the two came to terms, as it was determined that Garay would settle in Las Palmas with provisions and support from Cortés. Reconciling amicably, they also decided that Garay's oldest son would marry doña Catalina Pizarro, Cortés's illegitimate daughter and a child at the time.[415] **(Her mother was a Mexica noblewoman called doña Elvilla.**[416] **According to the lord don Hernando de Alvarado Tezozomoctzin, the said doña Catalina Pizarro was a mestiza whose mother was doña Elvilla, a Mexica *principala*,** "woman of high rank," **descended from the royal blood of kings and the great-granddaughter of Moteuczoma Ilhuicamina the elder, first of this name and fourth monarch of Mexico Tenochtitlan).**[417] Together they heard matins on Christmas Eve of the year of 1523 and ate together after mass the next day with great rejoicing. Garay felt a sharp pain in his side[418] from the cold wind that blew as he left the church. He made his testament, designating Cortés as executor, and died fifteen days later, although some say four. There was always someone who said [Garay] had been helped to die because he was staying with Alonso de Villanueva. It is not true, for he died from the pain in his side, as sworn by Doctor Ojeda and Licenciado Pero López, the physicians who took care of him. This is how the Adelantado Francisco de Garay met his death; impoverished, unhappy, in the house of a stranger, and in the land of his adversary. Had he been a more agreeable man, he would have died wealthy, content, and at home with his sons and wife.

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415. Cortés gave the girl one of his family names.

416. This may well be a Nahuatl-affected version of doña Elvira. Thanks to James Lockhart for his insight here.

417. C. went to great lengths to incorporate into his own annals select sections from the Spanish and Nahuatl annals of his contemporary, Alvarado Tezozomoc. However, there is no mention of doña Elvilla. This insert by C. is obviously from a section of Alvarado Tezozomoc's Nahuatl annals that heretofore was unknown. See *CC*, 1 for references to Alvarado Tezozomoc.

418. LdeG uses *dolor de costado*, presumably a description of a specific ailment, even pleurisy.

[Chapter 158]. The Pacification of Pánuco

As soon as Francisco de Garay departed for Mexico, Diego de Ocampo publicly proclaimed the expulsion of the captains and leaders of Garay's army from (f. 126) Santi Esteban, so they would not stir up the people of the region. Indeed, Juan de Grijalva, Gonzalo de Figueroa, Alonso de Mendoza, Lorenzo de Ulloa, Juan de Medina, Juan de Ávila, Antonio de la Cerda, Taborda, and many others were great friends of Diego Velázquez. Finding themselves without their commander, although one of Garay's sons remained, the army lost control and committed many abuses. They raided the towns, taking all the women and belongings they could, and went about without restriction or discipline. Angered, the Indians decided to kill them. In a short while, they slaughtered and ate four hundred Spaniards, beheading one hundred at Tamiquitl alone, which so enraged Garay that he suffered an early death. Their daring was such that the Indians **charged and** assailed Santi Esteban, which was almost lost. However, since its residents came out into the field to fight, they defeated the Indians after many battles. One night in Tucetuco, [the Indians] burned forty Spaniards and fifteen of Hernando Cortés's horses. As soon as Cortés learned of it, he sent Gonzalo de Sandoval with four cannons, fifty horsemen, one hundred foot soldiers, and two Mexica lords each with fifteen thousand Indian men and women **(**I mention Indian women because whenever Cortés or his captains went to war, they brought many women to bake bread or perform other services, and many Indians refused to go without their wives or female companions**)**. Advancing rapidly, Sandoval had two encounters with the people of Pánuco and disbanded them. He entered Santi Esteban and counted there only twenty-two horses and one hundred Spaniards. Had he delayed even a little, he would not have found them alive, for they were without food and were attacked furiously and incessantly. Sandoval divided his Spaniards into three companies so they would approach from as many sides, killing, sacking, and burning wherever they went. They inflicted much damage in a short time, for many towns were burned, countless people slaughtered, and sixty lords and four hundred rich principales, not counting all the commoners, were captured. All were tried and sentenced to death by fire upon confessing. After consulting with Cortés, Sandoval released the commoners but burned the sixty lords and the four hundred captives, calling their sons and heirs to witness and learn from it. He then gave them lordships in the name of the emperor, after they promised to always be friends of the Christians and Spaniards, although they seldom kept their word, being so inconstant and restless. In the end, however, Pánuco was subdued.

[Chapter 159]. The Tribulations of Licenciado Alonso Zuazo

On departing from Cabo de San Antón in Cuba for New Spain, Licenciado Zuazo encountered a storm that confused the caravel's pilot, and he became lost in Las Víboras, where some of his men were eaten by sharks and sea lions. The licenciado and other men in his company ate turtles. A type of fish shaped like a shield that can carry six men on its shell, it lays five hundred small eggs on land. They ate it raw, as there was no fire. Zuazo also stayed on another islet, where he survived on the raw meat and blood of birds. (f. 126v) He would have perished from thirst and heat, but he used sticks to make fire in the Indian manner, which helped him greatly. On yet another islet he located some water with much difficulty and burned firewood covered with stone, a novel thing. From the wood of the wrecked caravel, he constructed a small boat, which he used to notify Cortés of his misfortune by sending Francisco Ballester, Juan de Arenas, and Gonzalo Gómez, all of whom, upon finding themselves in a storm, pledged to remain chaste eternally [if they survived]. He also sent an Indian to bail water from the boat. They ended up near Quiahuahuiztlan, went on to Veracruz, and finally Medellín, where Diego de Ocampo outfitted a ship and gave it to them to search for Zuazo. On knowing of this, Cortés did the same, saying that Zuazo was to be well provided for upon his rescue. He sent a servant to wait for him in Medellín, who gave Zuazo 10,000 castellanos, horses, and clothing when he arrived. Zuazo went to Mexico, where Cortés received and lodged him well, and thus his despair was turned into happiness.

[Chapter 160]. The Conquest of Utlatlan by Pedro de Alvarado

The residents of Guatemala, Utlatlan, Chiapan,[419] Soconusco, and the other towns on the southern coast had offered their friendship after the destruction of Mexico, exchanging presents and ambassadors with the Spaniards. However, since they are fickle, they did not maintain the friendship, waging war instead on others who did. Cortés sent Pedro de Alvarado against them, thinking also that rich lands and strange people would be discovered there. He gave him three hundred Spaniards with one hundred escopetas, one hundred and **sixty** [LdeG: seventy] horses, four cannons, and some Mexica lords with their warriors and porters, as the road was a long one. Alvarado left Mexico on December 6, 1523, and reached Soconusco by way of Tehuantepec to

419. Chiapas (and hereinafter).

subdue several towns that had revolted, punishing many rebels by enslaving them after having made repeated requests and warnings. He fought for many days against the people of Zapatollan,[420] a very large fortified town where many Spaniards and some horses were wounded and an infinite number of Indians on both sides were slaughtered.

After Zapatollan, it took Alvarado three days to reach Quetzaltenanco. On the first day, he forded two rivers with great difficulty; on the second, he crossed a very steep and rugged mountain pass five leagues long, where a woman and a dog had been sacrificed on a high slope, and the interpreters and guides told him this was meant as a challenge. He fought about four thousand enemies in a ravine, and farther ahead he did battle in an open field against thirty thousand, defeating everyone, for they all took flight as soon as the horses (an animal they had never seen) drew near. They returned to do battle near some springs, but he defeated them again; the enemies regrouped at the foot of a mountain and charged the Spaniards with great spirit, shouts, and daring. Many Indians would wait to attack a horse, or even two, and others held fast to the tail in order to wound the rider. In the end, so much havoc was wreaked upon [the enemies] by horses and escopetas that they fled rapidly. Alvarado followed them a long while, killing many as he (f. 127) drew near. One of the four lords of Utlatlan, who came as captain general of that army, was killed, along with some Spaniards, while many men and horses were injured.

He entered Quetzaltenanco the next day, and, finding no one inside, he rested there and later scoured the land. Six days later, a large and orderly army of Quetzaltenanteca came to do battle with the Spaniards. Alvarado met them with ninety men on horseback, two hundred foot soldiers, and a good squadron of [Indian] friends. He remained on a wide plain a harquebus shot away from camp, in case he needed reinforcements. Each captain distributed his people according to the lay of the land, the armies charged each other, and ours vanquished theirs. The horsemen followed the attack for more than two leagues, and the foot soldiers carried out an incredible massacre when crossing a small river. The lords, captains, and other noblemen retreated to a hill, fighting along the way, where they were imprisoned and killed.

When the lords of Utlatlan and Quetzaltenanco saw the devastation, they summoned their neighbors and friends and giving an offering to their enemies in exchange for their assistance, they assembled a very large army. They sent word to Pedro de Alvarado to travel to Utlatlan,

420. Zapotitlán in LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 315. Gerhard, *Southeast Frontier*, 123, has Zapotitlan as a Chontal settlement in the Yucatan peninsula.

as they wished to be his friend and give obedience to the emperor once again. This was a scheme to burn the Spaniards alive at night after imprisoning them in the city, which is strongly fortified, with narrow streets, the houses clustered, and only two gates. One gate has thirty steps and the other opens onto a causeway that was already broken in many places, so the horses could not cross it. Believing the lords, Alvarado went to Utlatlan, but when he saw the broken causeway, the town's fortifications, and no women about, he suspected their deceit and turned around, but not quickly enough to avoid serious harm. He dissembled and spoke with the lords. This was, as they say, a case of one traitor equaling two scoundrels. Alvarado secured and captured them with beguiling words and gifts, but still the war went on and grew fierce, for the Spaniards were surrounded, and they could not go for firewood or hay without fighting.

Every day, the enemies killed some [friendly] Indians and even Spaniards, and our men could not scour the land to burn and cut down the maize fields and orchards because of the many deep ravines that protected their fort. Therefore, Alvarado burned the lords he had imprisoned, believing this would hasten his conquest of the land. He proclaimed he would burn the city and asked for the help of the people of Guatemala to determine their disposition toward him. They sent four thousand men, and they with the rest of his company pressured the enemy so much that Alvarado expelled them from their own land. The city's principales and commoners then came to him to surrender and ask for forgiveness. They blamed the war on the lords who had been burned, for they had admitted their guilt before being executed. Alvarado took their oath of loyalty, releasing two sons of the dead lords and giving them the dominions and authority of their fathers. And so this land was subdued, and Utlatlan resettled as before. Many other prisoners were branded and sold as slaves, and the royal fifth was taken by Baltasar de Mendoza, the expedition's treasurer. (f. 127v) The land is rich with many people, large towns, and abundant resources. There is a sierra with alum deposits, a liquor thick as oil, and sulphur of such quality that our harquebusiers made excellent gunpowder without need of refining or mixing. The war of Utlatlan ended at the beginning of April in the year 1524, at which time one dozen horseshoes sold for 190 castellanos.

[Chapter 161]. The Conquest of Guatemala

After leaving Utlatlan, Alvarado went to Guatemala where he was well received and lodged. There was a very large city on the shores of a lake

that waged war with Guatemala, Utlatlan, and other towns. Alvarado sent two men from Guatemala to beseech them not to harm their neighbors. He ordered them to pledge their friendship and commit to peace, but they killed the messengers without fear or shame, relying on their many canoes and the protection the lake afforded. Alvarado went there with one hundred and fifty Spaniards, sixty men on horseback, and many Indians from Guatemala, but they would not receive or speak with him. He led thirty horsemen as far as he could around the **water's** [LdeG: lake's] edge toward an inhabited rock in the lake. Seeing a squadron of armed men, he charged, scattered, and followed it along a causeway too narrow for horses. The men on horseback dismounted and climbed the rock, avoiding their adversaries. When reinforcements arrived, they soon captured the rock, killing many of its inhabitants, with survivors jumping into the water and swimming to another islet. The Spaniards sacked the houses and set up camp in an open maize field where they spent the night. They entered the city the following day, surprised by its desolation, for it was easily defended. The reason was that the rock, which was [their adversaries'] fortress, had been captured, and they had seen Spaniards come from all directions.

Alvarado raided the land, seizing prisoners. He sent three to their lords to beg them to come in peace, as they would be treated well; otherwise, he would pursue them and destroy their orchards and fields. They responded that, although no one had ever subdued their land by force, they would be his friends, since Alvarado had behaved so courageously. Therefore, they went to see him, touched his hands, and became peaceful men who rendered service to the Spaniards.

Alvarado returned to Guatemala, and three days later all the men on that lake came bearing presents to offer themselves and their property. Indeed, they wished to make peace with everyone, for Alvarado's sake, and to avoid war and conflict with their neighbors. Many other towns from the southern coast came to surrender and seek his favor, saying that the people from the province of Itzcuintepec would not let any friend of the Christians traverse their lands. Alvarado traveled there with all his men, sleeping in uninhabited areas for three days, and then approached the outskirts. Since the city, which was surrounded by thick groves, does not trade with other towns, the best road into town was no wider than a cow path. He arrived without being detected and attacked them in their houses, for it (f. 128) rained heavily and there was no one in the streets. He killed some, capturing others, and as the residents were not able to assemble or take up their weapons, most of them fled as soon as they were under attack. The residents who did not leave went into some houses to defend themselves, killing many of our Indians

and wounding some Spaniards. Alvarado set fire to the town, warning its lord that he would do the same to his fields and even his subjects if they did not pledge their obedience to the Spaniards. The lords and his people came to surrender, so Alvarado remained there for eight days, receiving all the neighboring towns who offered their friendship and service.

From Itzcuintepec, Alvarado traveled to Caetipar, where a different language is spoken, and then on to Taxixco and Nezendelan. Many of our Indians who lagged behind were killed; many packs and all the iron fittings and cord for the crossbows were taken, which was no mean loss. Alvarado sent his brother Jorge de Alvarado with forty horsemen after [the inhabitants], but he was unable to recover the goods despite the distance he traveled. The men of Nezendelan held a small bell in each hand when they fought. [Pedro de Alvarado] remained in that town more than eight days, but could not win over its inhabitants. He left for Paçucu, as its treasonous inhabitants had begged him to come, plotting to kill him in a trap. Along the way, he saw many arrows buried in the ground and some men quartering a dog at the town's entrance, both of which were signs of war and enmity. Upon encountering some warriors, he attacked, chased them out of town, and killed many.

He went to **Mopilanco** [LdeG: Mopicalanco] and then to Acayuccatl, near the South Sea. Before entering these towns, he reached a field full of warriors of noble demeanor who had heard of his expedition and awaited him to do battle. He approached them, and although he had two hundred and fifty Spanish foot soldiers, one hundred horsemen, and six thousand Indians, he dared not attack, as he saw they were strong and in good formation. Nonetheless, they charged as he passed by, seizing the horsemen by their stirrups and their horses' tails. The men on horseback counterattacked, followed by the entire army, and they left almost no one alive. The Indians fought fiercely without retreating, but as their armor was heavy, if they fell, they could not get up and flee. Their armor was a sacklike garment with sleeves and leggings made of stiff, twisted cotton three fingers thick. The Indians looked fine in them, for their armor was white and other colors, and they also wore large feather headdresses. They carried large arrows and spears thirty palmos long; many Spaniards were wounded, and Pedro de Alvarado was left limping from an arrow shot into one of his legs, which became four fingers shorter than the other. Later, he fought a larger, stronger army that carried very long lances at the ready, which he also defeated and destroyed. He went to Mauhatlan and then to Atlechuan, where the people of Cuitlachan came to surrender, but deceitfully, as they intended to kill the Spaniards and thought them

an easy sacrifice, as they were so few. Alvarado learned of their evil intentions and sued for peace, but they abandoned the city and fought rebelliously against him, killing eleven of his horses. They paid for [the horses] when Alvarado sold them as captives into slavery. He remained there for twenty days without winning them over and then returned to Guatemala. Pedro de Alvarado's expedition covered four hundred leagues with few spoils, but he pacified and secured the friendship of many provinces. He suffered (f. 128v) from hunger and many travails, crossing rivers with water so hot they could not be waded. Alvarado so liked the disposition of the land and people of Guatemala that he decided to remain and establish settlements, following Cortés's orders. He founded a city, calling it Santiago de Guatemala, and appointed two alcaldes, four regidores, and all the officers necessary for good governance. He erected a church with the same name, which is now the seat of the bishopric of Guatemala. After giving Cortés an account of his travels and intentions, he distributed many towns in encomienda to the conquerors and settlers. Cortés sent him two hundred Spaniards, confirmed the repartimientos, and helped him request the position of governor [from the king].

[Chapter 162]. The War at Chamolla

On December 8, [15]23, Hernando Cortés sent Diego de Godoy[421] to Villa del Espíritu Santo with thirty horsemen, one hundred Spanish foot soldiers, two cannons, and many friends to go against some neighboring provinces that had rebelled. He did not give him more men because the region lay between Chiapas and Guatemala, which Pedro de Alvarado would soon reach, and near Las Higueras,[422] to which Cristóbal de Olid would soon depart. Godoy had a peaceful journey there and then participated in some expeditions and attacks with the lieutenant of that new villa. He reached Chamolla,[423] a large, fortified town and the head of its province, located on a hill that the horses could not climb. It is surrounded by a palisade three estados in height with the lower half made of earth and stones and the upper made of wood. Godoy attacked the town over the course of two days, putting his diligent army in great danger, and in the end captured it, for its residents packed their

421. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 61, states that Godoy held various posts as notary and later stayed behind in Honduras as the captain of forty settlers.

422. Las Higueras is frequently used interchangeably with Honduras.

423. Gerhard, *Southeast Frontier*, 150, describes Chamula (and hereinafter) as a Tzotzil fortress.

belongings and fled, seeing that resistance was futile. When the battle began, the Indians tossed a piece of gold over the wall at the Spaniards to mock their madness and greed, shouting they should enter, for they would find much gold within. Before fleeing, they left many lances on the palisades, so the besiegers would think they were still there, but they could not do so without being seen by our men, who came in to kill but captured only women and youths. The spoils were modest, but the provisions abundant. Lances were their main weapon, as well as shields of woven cotton that covered their bodies; they would roll them up on the road and unroll them before combat. Godoy's expedition visited and traversed Chiapas, Huehueiztlan, and other cities and provinces, but nothing else worth recounting occurred.

[Chapter 163]. The Fleet Cortés Sent to Las Higueras with Cristóbal de Olid

Cortés wished to settle Las Higueras and Honduras, famous for their abundance of gold and good land, but far from Mexico. Since the Spaniards had to travel there by sea, however, the journey was much easier. Although he hoped to send his men there before Francisco de Garay arrived at Pánuco, he did not since he could not afford to lose the river and land (f. 129) already settled. Cortés's resolve strengthened when he saw himself delivered from such a powerful competitor and received the letters from the emperor signed in Valladolid on June 6, [15]23. The documents contained orders for him to explore both sea coasts in order to find the strait everyone talked about. [Cortés] gave 7,000 gold castellanos to Alonso de Contreras so he would go to Cuba to recruit men and buy horses, weapons, and provisions. He then dispatched Cristóbal de Olid with four hundred Spaniards and thirty horses aboard five ships and a brigantine outfitted with artillery and provisions. Olid was to go to Havana to claim all the men, horses, and provisions in Contreras's possession in order to settle the cape at Las Higueras. Following the emperor's orders, Olid was to send Cortés's cousin, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, to reconnoiter the coast from the cape to Darién to find the much discussed strait. Cortés also gave him additional instructions, and according to some, Cristóbal de Olid left Chalchicueyecan on January 11, [15]24. Cortés also sent two ships to seek the strait from Pánuco to La Florida, ordering the brigantines to search carefully along the coast between Zacatula and Panama; however, when the order arrived, the brigantines had already burned, and thus it had no effect.

[Chapter 164]. The Conquest of the Zapotec Region

After the destruction of Mexico, the large and belligerent provinces of the Zapotec and Mixtec peoples broke away from the allegiance they had sworn to Cortés, joining forces with many other towns against the Spaniards and suffering much death and harm. Cortés sent Rodrigo Rangel[424] to the region, but he could not subdue these peoples for lack of horses, the heavy rains, and their great courage. Rather, Rangel's loss of Spaniards during the expedition increased the natives' determination. Indeed, they sacked and laid waste to many towns allied with Cortés that later complained continuously, asking for punishment and reparation. Cortés sent Rangel against them once again with one hundred and fifty Spaniards **(**since horses cannot **compensate for** [LdeG: withstand] combat on that land**)** and with many men from Tlaxcala and Mexico. Rodrigo Rangel departed on February 5, [15]24, with four small cannons. He read the requerimiento to the towns repeatedly; since they would not listen, he waged war against them, killing and capturing many, whom he branded and sold as slaves. He brought to Mexico the abundant gold and other goods he took from them, leaving the natives so diminished and cowed that they never revolted again. Cortés and his captains led many conquests and expeditions, but those we have recounted here were the main ones that subdued the Mexica empire and many other great kingdoms within New Spain, Guatemala, Pánuco, Jalisco, and Honduras, all of which are separate governorships.

[Chapter 165]. The Rebuilding of Mexico

Cortés decided to rebuild Mexico, not solely because of its location and majesty, but for its renown and reputation and to restore what he had undone, so he strove to make the city larger, greater, and more populous. He appointed alcaldes, regidores, *almotacenes*, "inspectors of weights and measures," procuradores, escribanos, alguaciles, and all the other posts that a council (f. 129v) requires. He planned the city's layout, dividing the city blocks among the conquerors and marking the sites for churches, squares, boat landings, and other community and public buildings. Decreeing that the Spanish quarter was to be separated from that of the Indians by water, he brought many Indians in order to lower the costs of

424. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 111, notes that Rangel may well have been the oldest conqueror. He reportedly was always complaining about various ailments and was ultimately accused of and punished for blasphemy. He received Cholula in encomienda but died in 1531, already a very old man.

construction, a difficult undertaking since many of the lords who were relatives of **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc and other prisoners mutinied and tried to kill [Cortés] and his captains in order to free their king. He searched for ways to capture and punish them, while the rest eventually went happily [to Mexico]. Cortés appointed don Carlos Ixtlilxochitl as lord of Tetzcoco, in accordance with the petition and will of that city after the death of don Hernando **Tecocoltzin**, don Carlos's brother, and requested that he send the majority of his subjects to the site, as they were carpenters, stonemasons, and house builders. He gave and pledged city lots, inheritances, exemptions, and other favors to the natives of Mexico and to the many that he invited to settle and live in the city. Releasing Captain General **don Juan Velázquez Tlacotzin** Cihuacoatl, he gave him the lordship and put him in charge of the people and building efforts of a quarter **called Xolloco and Acatlan, where the church of San Antonio Abad, the glorious and most holy patriarch of the friars, now stands.**[425] To mollify the Mexica, Cortés granted another quarter to don Pedro Moteuczoma **Tlacahuepan,** for he was the son of King Moteuczoma, **great monarch of this land and New World.**[426] **The quarter given to don Pedro Moteuczoma Tlacahuepan, called** [San Sebastián] **Atzacualco, is where the church of San Sebastián stood originally; nowadays, the friary of the discalced fathers of the Order of Nuestra Señora del Carmen is there.**[427]

Cortés made other noblemen lords of various islands and streets so they would establish settlements there; he divided the site among them, and they distributed the lands and city lots among themselves, building with great speed and joy. So many people heard the news that Mexico Tenochtitlan was being rebuilt and that its residents would enjoy various exemptions that they could barely squeeze into the city from a distance of one league. They worked hard, ate little, and fell ill; there was a pestilence, and an infinite number of them perished. The labor was considerable, since they dragged or carried on their backs stones, earth, wood,

425. As noted earlier, this is Xoloco and the church of San Antonio Abad, where C. lived and worked from 1593–c. 1624. Acatlan was the next tlaxilacalli to the east and the home of the illustrious line of the great Tlacaellel Cihuacoatl (d. 1487, 8-Reed). C. reports that in 1610 "don Miguel Sánchez Huentzin, a noble of Acatlan died." With his death, the noble lineage of Acatlan came to an end. C., *Annals of His Time*, ed. and trans., James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala (Stanford, 2006), 167, and *CC*, 1:53.

426. See *CC*, 1:55, where C. notes that among Moteuczoma's most celebrated children was a Tlacahuepantzin Ihualicahuaca, who later became a Christian and was called don Pedro Moteuczoma.

427. San Sebastián Atzacualco was the northeast quarter of San Juan Tenochtitlan. See C., *Annals of His Time*, 113–15, for specifics about first the Augustinians and then the Carmelites taking charge of the local church. Although the Spanish term *convento*, "convent," is used in the text, we have substituted friary for greater accuracy.

lime, bricks, and other materials. However, it was worth hearing their music and songs as they proclaimed the name of their town or lord and bantered back and forth. There was little to eat since the fields had not been sown due to the city's siege; besides, the numbers of people led to hunger, pestilence, and a high death toll. Still, in a short while they rebuilt one hundred thousand houses in Mexico better than before, and the Spaniards constructed many good houses in our style. Cortés built his, large as a town, in one of Moteuczoma's residences, generating an income of 4,000 ducats or more. Pánfilo de Narváez criticized the construction, saying Cortés had felled whole forests, using seven thousand cedar beams. Here this seems like a considerable number, but there, where the forests are teeming with cedar trees, it is nothing at all. There is an orchard in Tetzcoco whose walls and fence are made from one thousand cedar trees. It is not unusual for a cedar beam to measure one hundred and twenty feet long and twelve feet wide, from end (f. 130) to end, and not round, but square shaped, like the one at Cacama's house in Tetzcoco.

Several very good shipyards were built to store the brigantines and as forts for the men, partly on land and partly on water, and where three ships used to be now there are thirteen brigantines. The canals were no longer used as streets and the building took place on dry land, and in this it is not like the Mexico of before as even the lake has shrunk since [15]24. At times there is a bad odor; but as regards everything else, the city is very clean, tempered by the mountains that surround it and provided for by the land's fertility and the lake's proximity. It is known to be the most populated area, and Mexico the largest city in the world and the most advanced in the Indies in arms as well as in government. There are two thousand Spanish residents with as many horses in stables with rich trappings and arms, and there is much trade, with officials in charge of silk and cloth, glass, casting and coinage, and a *studium*[428] brought by Viceroy don Antonio de Mendoza. Therefore, the residents of Mexico have a right to be proud, although there is a great difference between its former conquerors and its ordinary residents.

Although the rebuilding of Mexico was not yet finished, Cortés, along with the residents and soldiers moved there from Colhuacan. Cortés's fame and Mexico's greatness spread; in a short time, there were so many Spaniards and Indians, as mentioned above, that they were able to conquer more than four hundred leagues of land and all the provinces named before, and Hernando Cortés governed it all from [Mexico City].

428. Stafford Poole, C.M., tells us that, as *studium* means "study," the term may well refer to the constitution for the establishment of the royal university in Mexico City. Personal communication, 12 October 2007.

[Chapter 166]. How Cortés Took Care to Enrich New Spain

It seemed to Cortés that the glory and fame of conquering New Spain and the other kingdoms were not merited until he civilized and fortified them. For this purpose, he brought to Mexico with great pomp and entourage doña Catalina Suárez, who had remained in Santiago de Cuba during the wars. He had many of the residents of Mexico and other villas he settled send for women. He gave monies to bring from Spain noble maidens who were Old Christians, and many married men brought their daughters at his expense, as was the case of Comendador Leonel [LdeG: de Cervantes][429] who brought seven daughters, all of whom married well and honorably. For purposes of livestock production, he requested cows, [LdeG: sows, ewes, she-goats], jennies, and mares from the islands of Cuba, Santo Domingo, San Juan del Borinquen, and Jamaica. **(**At that time, and even earlier, it was forbidden to take horses from those islands, especially from Cuba, because they were sold at a higher price, knowing Cortés's wealth and his need and desire**)** for meat, milk, wool, and hides, as well as for their use in transport, work, and war. He sent for sugarcane, mulberry trees for silk, vine cuttings, and other plants from these same islands, and to Spain for arms, iron, artillery, gunpowder, tools, and forges for ironwork; he also sent for the pits from fruit and seeds that do not grow on the islands. He wrought five pieces of artillery, two of which were culverins, at great expense, since there was little tin, and it was very expensive. He bought plates of it for the price of silver, which he extracted with great difficulty in Taxco, twenty-six leagues from Mexico, where there were some small pieces of silver about the size of coins. When he did so, he found a vein of iron, which pleased him.

With the five pieces of artillery and those he purchased at Juan Ponce de León's auction and from Pánfilo de Narváez, (f. 130v) he had a total of thirty-five bronze and seventy castiron cannons, with which he fortified Mexico, and later he received more from Spain, along with harquebuses and corselets. He ordered that all the conquered territory be searched for silver and gold, and many rich mines were found that enhanced the land, although at the cost of the lives of many Indians, who by force were brought to work in the mines as slaves. Cortés moved the port and docks for the ships from Veracruz to a place two leagues from San Juan de Ulúa, an inlet with an estuary for boats that is safer, and he relocated Medellín there, where a large wharf safe for ships is now being built. He established a board of trade, leveling the road from there to Mexico for the mule trains that transport merchandise.

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429. LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 327, has M. de la Chau and describes him as Chamberlain.

[Chapter 167]. How the Bishop of Burgos Was Recused [LdeG: from Cortés's Affairs]

The bishop of Burgos, Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, who governed the Indies, felt such hatred and enmity against Hernando Cortés and such love and friendship for Diego Velázquez that he concealed and slighted Cortés's service and feats. Cortés was **dishonored** [LdeG: defamed] when he most merited fame. Neither his father, Martín Cortés, nor Francisco de Montejo, nor Licenciado Francisco de Núñez, his cousin, nor any of his procuradores was able to obtain a writ or answer of any kind from the bishop on the issue of the conquest of New Spain to the conquerors' satisfaction. Because the king [Charles V] was in Germany as emperor, the bishop oversaw all the business of the Indies; there was no resolution or even a hope of fair negotiations. Cortés's procuradores therefore decided to recuse the bishop, no matter how harsh or unseemly it appeared. They spoke with Pope Adrian [VI], who governed these kingdoms before he went to Italy, and with the emperor upon his arrival. The pope decided to investigate the matter thoroughly, since the bishop was such an important personage. He did so at the request of Monsieur de **Nasao** [LdeG: Lassao], a member of the emperor's council who had gone to congratulate the pope on his election and who favored Cortés due to his reputation.

Apparently, after hearing all sides and reading the reports, the pope commanded the bishop, who was in Zaragoza, not to involve himself in Cortés's affairs or those of the Indies. The emperor commanded the same, following the pope's stand. The grounds given, which were corroborated, were that the bishop always expressed hatred toward Cortés and his affairs, publicly calling him a traitor; that he hid [Cortés's] accounts from and distorted his service to the king; that he ordered Juan López de Recalde, accountant of the Casa de Contratación in Seville, not to allow the consignment to New Spain of men, arms, clothing, iron, or other goods; that he bestowed offices and posts on unworthy men, such as Cristóbal de Tapia; that he sided with Diego Velázquez so that [Velázquez] would marry his niece, doña Petronila de Fonseca; and that he agreed to and accepted Diego Velázquez's falsified reports drafted by Andrés de Duero, Manuel de Rojas, and others, as opposed to Cortés's own reports.

The latter was the worst affront, since to condemn authentic accounts and approve false ones was perceived as very wrong. The decision to recuse him was sufficient cause for the bishop to leave the court displeased and angry and for Diego Velázquez (f. 131) to be convicted and removed as governor of Cuba, save that he died shortly afterward, and Cortés was then declared governor of New Spain with great honors.

Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca had attended to the business of the Indies for almost thirty years, many of them in absolute fashion. He began as dean in Seville and ended as bishop in Burgos, archbishop in Rosano, and commissary general of the [Holy] Crusade, and would have been archbishop of Toledo, had he more spirit. However, since he was an extremely rich cleric and had served for a long period of time, and his brother Antonio de Fonseca favored him, he became overly confident. His nephew don Alonso de Fonseca, archbishop of Santiago, [was promoted instead to archbishop of Toledo], stealing his blessing, as they say, and loaning monies for [the battle of] Fuenterrabía. For this reason, they did not **get along** [LdeG: speak to each other].

[Chapter 168]. How Cortés Became Governor

After the bishop of Burgos was recused, the emperor commanded that the disagreements and lawsuits between Hernando Cortés and Diego Velázquez be evaluated and resolved by [a commision formed of] Grand Chancellor Mercurino Gattinara, an Italian; Monsieur de **Nasao** [LdeG: Lassao];[430] Doctor de la Rocha, a Fleming; Fernando de Vega, lord of Grajales and *comendador mayor*, "an office in a military order," of Castile; Doctor Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal; and Licenciado Francisco de Vargas, treasurer general of Castile. They met for many days in the houses of Alonso de Argüello, where the grand chancellor resided. They heard from Martín Cortés, Francisco de Montejo, Francisco Núñez, and Cortés's other procuradores, and from Manuel de Rojas, Andrés de Duero, and other procuradores of Diego Velázquez. After reading the proceedings, they sentenced in favor of Cortés, guided more by legal right and rule of justice than by their admiration for Cortés's virtue, exalting his exploits and service and endorsing his loyalty. They ruled against Diego Velázquez's claim as governor in New Spain, leaving him the right [to sue in the future] if Cortés owed him anything. I even believe the government in Cuba was taken from him because he dispatched Pánfilo de Narváez with an army.

This history gives an account of the pleas, reasons, and just causes with which Cortés responded to counteract the lawsuit and be given the governance of New Spain and the lands he conquered. He was accused of having taken money under Velázquez's authority to discover, rescue, and conquer without returning with the profits or obeying him; of put-

430. Nasao, or Count Henry of Nassau. For information about Gattinara's role as adviser to Charles V and the organization and importance of the various councils serving the emperor, see J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1469–1716* (London, 1990), 165, 170–73.

ting out one of Narváez's eyes; of not receiving Cristóbal de Tapia; of disobeying the royal mandates; of not paying the royal fifth; and of tyrannizing the Spaniards and mistreating the Indians.

Following the lords' sentence and their counsel, the emperor appointed Hernando Cortés adelantado, *repartidor*, "distributor of encomiendas," and governor of New Spain and all the lands he had won, acclaiming and confirming his service to him and to God. He signed the decrees in Valladolid, on October 22, [LdeG: year of] 1522. They were signed by Licenciado don García de Padilla and authenticated by Secretary Francisco de los Cobos. (f. 131v) He also gave Cortés cédulas to expel renegades and lawyers from New Spain; the latter so there would be fewer lawsuits, and the former so they would not disrupt evangelization. The emperor wrote to thank [Cortés] for his labors in the conquest and for serving God by removing the idols. He promised great favors to encourage him to undertake similar enterprises, saying that he would send bishops, clerics, and friars for [purposes of] conversion as he had requested and would send all other items he required in order to fortify, cultivate, and advance the land. His Majesty's good dispatches were brought by Francisco de las Casas and Rodrigo de Paz. They notified Diego Velázquez of the sentence and mandate by public proclamation in Santiago de Baracoa, Cuba, the following May of [15]23. This caused Diego Velázquez so much suffering that he died soon thereafter. He died sad and poor, having been very wealthy, yet even after his death, his heirs never asked anything of Cortés.

[Chapter 169]. On the Conquerors

Cortés always distributed the land among those who conquered it according to the customs of the Indies, either because he was entrusted, as chief *repartidor*, with what was conquered or to oblige his friends, who were many. Since he had received the cédula from the emperor to grant encomiendas and distribute New Spain among the conquerors and settlers, he distributed many large repartimientos, ordering the *encomenderos*, "recipients of encomiendas," to see to the indoctrination of Christianity of the Indians in the encomiendas and attend to their conversion, as many asked to be baptized. Not everyone received a repartimiento, since it was impossible to do so and too much [for Cortés to distribute]; nor did he apportion things as they wished and expected, and therefore some were taken aback and others complained. Nothing so provokes or upsets the conquerors more than the repartimientos, and for no other reason have the captains and governors sustained so much

enmity and hatred. Therefore, although this charge [chief repartidor] is the most necessary and honorable, it is also the most damaging and invidious. All the kings and republics that ruled vast landholdings distributed them among their captains and soldiers, or to citizens, founding towns to conserve their estates in perpetuity and to reward the labors and services of their families.

In Spain, this practice was established and maintained since the earliest monarchs, and Catholic monarchs don Fernando and doña Isabel and even the emperor followed the practice, until he was counseled otherwise. In Madrid, in the year [15]25, Charles V instituted repartimientos in perpetuity, which was much more in accord and agreement with his Council of the Indies and with the numerous Dominicans, Franciscans, and other learned people brought together to discuss the issue, as many affirmed. Those who go to conquer lands work and spend considerable sums, and they are honored and enriched accordingly. They become noble and famous, and it is a great privilege to be a knight of the conquest. If history allowed it, all the conquerors (f. 132) would be so named, but since this cannot be, may each do so in his own house.

[Chapter 170]. How Cortés Carried Out the Conversion of the Indians

Whenever Cortés entered a town, he hurled down the idols and forbade human sacrifice to eliminate any offense to God or insult to his fellow man. With the first letters and monies that he sent to the emperor after having conquered Mexico, he asked His Majesty and the Council of the Indies for bishops, clerics, and friars to preach to and convert the Indians. He then wrote to fray Francisco de los Ángeles, general of the Franciscans and a member of the Quiñones family, to send him friars for the purpose of conversion, saying he would give them tithes from the land. [Fray Francisco] sent Cortés twelve friars with fray Martín de Valencia de Don Juan, provincial of San Gabriel, a very saintly and miraculous man.[431] Cortés made the same request to fray García de Loaysa, general of

431. C. was quite familiar with the history of fray Martín and tells of his stay in Amecameca, as well as how worried and upset the ruler of Amecameca was when the friar became mortally ill. Apparently, he was placed in a canoe and taken from place to place along Lake Chalco before finally being sent on to Mexico City. No one wanted the good friar to die in his altepetl. Unfortunately, he passed away on a *chinampa* near Ayotzinco. His relics were later placed in a cave in Sacromonte in Amecameca, a pilgrimage site even today. See Susan Schroeder, "Chimalpahin's View of Spanish Ecclesiastics in Colonial Mexico," in *Indian-Religious Relations in Colonial Spanish America*, ed. Susan E. Ramírez (Syracuse, 1989), 21–38.

the Dominicans, who did not send him any until the year [15]26, when he received fray Tomás Ortiz with twelve companions. As the bishops had not come and few clerics arrived, he thought it expedient to again ask the emperor to send him many friars who would build monasteries, attend to conversion, and collect tithes. However, although he was advised instead to ask the pope, His Majesty refused to do so, as it was not to his advantage.

In the year [15]24, fray Martín de Valencia arrived in Mexico as papal vicar with twelve companions. Offering the friars gifts, service, and respect, Cortés never spoke to them without first taking his hat in his hand and touching his knee to the ground. He kissed their habit to set an example for the Indians who would become Christians and because he was humble and devoted to them. The Indians marveled at his humility, since they adored him and therefore greatly revered the friars, [LdeG: He told the Spaniards to honor the friars], especially those who had Indians about to be converted. They did so by giving alms in order to redeem their sins, although some questioned why Cortés should help [the friars], who would later destroy them once they were in the kingdom [New Spain], words that he would be reminded of many times over.

Once the friars arrived, the conversion intensified with many idols destroyed, and since many clerics and other friars had been sent by Cortés to the encomienda towns, great benefits were derived from their preaching, baptisms, and marriages. Of the baptized men, it was difficult to know which one of their many wives they should marry within the church [LdeG: as is the custom of our Holy Mother Church]. Since they could not say, or our men determine, Cortés convened a synod that same year of [15]24, which was the first in the Indies, to deal with this and other situations. It was composed of thirty men, six of whom were university-trained although secular, and among them, Cortés; five were clerics and nineteen, friars. With fray Martín presiding as papal vicar, they declared that, at that time, the Indians could marry whom they wished, since the Spaniards' marriage rites were not fully understood.

[Chapter 171] The Silver Cannon that Cortés Fashioned for the Emperor

On October 15, [15]24, Cortés wrote the emperor from Mexico, kissing His Majesty's feet for the gifts and favors that he had bestowed on him. He asked for exemptions and privileges on behalf of the conquerors for the villas he had settled and for Tlaxcala, Tetzcoco, and other towns that

had assisted and served him in the wars. With Diego de Soto,[432] he sent the emperor 70,000 (f. 132v) gold castellanos and a silver culverin worth 24,000 gold pesos. It was a beautiful piece, more for show than for use, very heavy and made of silver from Michoacan. It had a phoenix carved in bas relief with a verse addressed to the emperor, stating:

> This one was born without peer;
> I, to serve you like no other;
> You, without equal in the world.[433]

I do not wish to recount all the items made of feather, fur, and cotton that Cortés sent along, since they could not compare with the culverin, neither could the pearls, the tigers, and other good things of that land, so foreign here in Spain. I will state, however, that the cannon caused much jealousy and bad feelings among some of **Cortés's** men [LdeG: at court] because of the inscription. However, the common people praised it to the heavens, and I believe that no silver cannon was ever made, save for this one by Cortés. He himself composed the couplet, since when he set his mind to it, he was not a bad poet, and while others tried out their poetic talents, they failed, to which Andrés de Tapia had this to say:

> This cannon, I believe
> Will many fools conceive.[434]

And perhaps it was because it cost more than 3,000 castellanos to make.

Cortés sent 25,000 gold castellanos and 1,550 silver marcos to his father, Martín Cortés, so he would send him his wife, weapons, artillery, iron, ships with many sails, ropes, anchors, clothing, plants, vegetables, and similar items to improve the good land he had conquered. But the king took it all, along with the rest that had come from the Indies. With the monies sent by Cortés to the emperor, the [LdeG: king's] treasury [in New Spain] was left empty, and Cortés without a cent, thanks to what he had spent on the armies and fleets, as this history has related to you.

At that time, many servants and officers of the king came to Mexico: Alonso de Estrada from Ciudad Real as treasurer, Gonzalo de Salazar from Granada as *factor*, "treasury official," Rodrigo de Albornoz from Paradinas as accountant, and Peralmíndez Chirinos as inspector, and

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432. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 244, states that de Soto first served as captain for Pánfilo Narváez and later as one of Cortés's most important aides.

433. **Aques** [*sic*] [LdeG: Aquesta] nazio sin par; / Yo en seruiros sin Segundo; / Vos sin ygual en el Mundo. (f. 132v)

434. Aqueste tiro a mi ver / Muchos Nezios a de hazer. (f. 126v)

they were the first in New Spain to hold these offices.[435] Many conquerors who had solicited them became angry and complained about Cortés. They discussed matters with Julián de Alderete and with the others whom Cortés and the cabildo had selected to collect and receive the king's fifth, rents, and treasury. They did not approve some of the allotments given to Cortés in the amount of 60,000 castellanos, but since he proved he had spent them in the service of the emperor and asked for more than another 50,000 that he had invested of his own funds, the account was closed.

The officials continued to believe that Cortés had great riches, both from what they heard in Spain and because Juan de Rivera offered 200,000 ducats in Cortés's name to the emperor (f. 133). Also, there was always someone whispering in their ear that the Indians brought him gold, silver, cacao, pearls, featherwork, and other valuable items every day, and that he had hidden Moteuczoma's treasure and stolen that of the emperor and the conquerors, which the Indians would secretly take out from the side gate of his house.

Thus, when the officials wrote back to Spain they did not consider what Cortés had sent to Castile and spent on the wars. In particular, Rodrigo de Albornoz took coded information [to the court] with what he wished to make known about Cortés, saying he was avaricious and tyrannical. They believed all they heard about him, since they did not know him, were ill informed, and found many people who disliked him for not having been given any or all of the repartimientos they had requested.

[Chapter 172]. On the Strait that Many Searched for in the Indies

In Castile, it was hoped that a strait would be found through the Indies to reach the Moluccas in order to avoid lawsuits with Portugal over the spice trade. It was believed that a strait existed ever since Cristóbal Colón discovered Tierra Firme and even more so after Vasco Núñez de Balboa discovered the [LdeG: other] sea, noting how narrow was the stretch of land that connected Nombre de Dios and Panama. Thus, the emperor ordered Pedrarias de Ávila, Cortés, Gil González de Ávila, and others to begin a search from Veragua to Yucatan. They set out almost at the same time, although Pedrarias sent Francisco Hernández with the intention

435. LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 412, states that the contador, "accountant," was one of four treasury officials assigned to New Spain. The other three were the veedor, "inspector"; factor, "business agent"; and tesorero, "treasurer." All have been mentioned above in one capacity or another.

to conquer and settle, rather than find the strait. Hernández settled Nicaragua and reached Honduras. As we have already related, Hernando Cortés sent Cristóbal de Olid to Honduras. Gil González left purposely in the year of [15]23 to settle San Gil de Buena Vista, ruining and dispossessing Francisco Hernández, and started to conquer that land.

[Chapter 173]. How Cristóbal de Olid Rebelled Against Hernando Cortés

On Cortés's orders, Cristóbal de Olid went to Havana, Cuba, to seize the horses and provisions that Contreras had purchased, which were very expensive. At that time, a fanega of maize cost 2 gold pesos; beans, 4 pesos; and chickpeas, 9. An arroba of oil cost 3 pesos; the same quantity of vinegar, 4; grease candles, 9 [LdeG: and an arroba of soap, another 9]; a quintal of tow, 4 pesos; another of iron, 6; and 2, a rope of garlic. A lance cost 1 peso; a dagger, 3, a spade, 8, a crossbow, 20, and the ball of cord, 1; an escopeta, 1,000. A pair of shoes cost 1 gold peso, and a cowhide, 12. A shipmaster earned 800 pesos a month. Despite these high costs, Cortés launched this and other fleets, spending 30,000 castellanos on this one alone.

While the ships were being outfitted with provisions, water, and firewood, Olid wrote to Diego Velázquez, plotting to rebel with the soldiers, fleet, and land under his command. Juan Ruano, Andrés de Duero, Bachiller Parada, and Provisor Moreno intervened in the plot, along with others who were discovered after Velázquez and Olid died. Taking what Contreras and Diego Velázquez gave him, (f. 133v) Olid disembarked fifteen leagues before reaching Puerto de Caballos because of the bad weather and danger he encountered. Since he landed on May 3, he called the town he founded El Triunfo de la Cruz, naming as alcaldes, regidores, and officials those who had been appointed by Cortés in Mexico. He took possession and carried out other official acts on behalf of the emperor and Hernando Cortés, whose power of attorney he held. It seemed later that he had done this to assure Cortés's relatives and servants, to be well protected, and to explore that land. Soon afterward, however, Olid demonstrated hatred and hostility toward Cortés and his affairs, threatening to hang anyone who opposed or spoke against [Olid]. Because he promised offices, bishoprics, and audiencias to many, no one attacked him.

Olid no longer sent people to discover the strait and instead concentrated on driving from the land and coast Gil González de Ávila, who, as I said, had settled San Gil de Buena Vista. He killed many Spaniards

in the process, among them, Gil de Ávila, González de Ávila's nephew, and seized González de Ávila himself, along with numerous others, so he alone would remain in that land, as it was not poor. When Cortés learned what Cristóbal de Olid had done, he immediately sent Francisco de las Casas in two well-equipped and well-manned ships with new powers of attorney and orders to capture him. As soon as Olid saw the ships, he suspected their purpose; he and his men boarded two caravels he had brought with him, firing at [the ships] to impede their landing. Las Casas raised a white flag, but he was not believed. Launching his small boats with numerous men armed to fight and land if they could, he began to detonate his artillery. Since Olid refused to take heed, thus revealing his ill will and rebellion, Las Casas went so far as to sink one of his caravels. No one was drowned, however, and he did not risk reaching the port. Instead, he remained with his ships at the ready waiting to see what Cristóbal de Olid would do. Deciding not to attack the ships, Olid instead awaited a company of his men that he had sent against Gil González. In the meantime, a torment with very strong wind came upon them; it ripped in half Las Casas's ships, so the men on board were soon captured without any bloodshed. They spent three days without food, drenched and cold, with some forty Spaniards perishing. As he had done with Gil Gonzaléz's men, Olid made Las Casas's men swear on a bible that they would always obey him in everything, never oppose him, and never again follow Cortés. He released them all, save for Francisco de las Casas, whom he took with him to Naco, a good town destroyed by Alvítez and Cerezeda. In this way, Olid captured Las Casas and either before or after (as others say), he took González de Ávila. No matter when, it is true that he had them both imprisoned in his house at the same time. He was very proud of the fact that he had such important prisoners, both because this increased his reputation and fame and because he thought he now had the land to himself and would reach an accord with Cortés.

However, just the opposite occurred, for Las Casas begged (f. 134) many times in front of all the Spaniards to be set free so he could go and give an account of himself to Cortés, since having him imprisoned did not serve Olid well. And as the answer was always in the negative, he told Olid to then keep him securely locked up, otherwise he would kill him (strong and daring words for a captive). Olid, who thought himself fearless, kept him disarmed and guarded by his servants, ignoring his threats. Both [Las Casas and Ávila] plotted to kill him; and dining all three at one table (others say as they walked by the living room), they took two serving or pen knives from a desk. While Las Casas held him by the beard so he could not move, they stabbed him many times, saying the time had

come to free themselves from this tyrant. Olid escaped from them finally, fleeing to the countryside to hide in some Indians' huts. He thought that when his men returned from dinner (for he was alone then), they would kill Francisco de las Casas and Gil González, but they cried out, "Cortés's men are here!" Easily and without bloodshed, [Cortés's men] soon overtook the Spaniards under Cristóbal de Olid's command and imprisoned some who remained on his side. Making a public pronouncement against Olid, they found out where he was hidden. They captured and tried him. Sentenced by both men shortly after his capture, he was beheaded publicly in Naco. He thus lost his life for underestimating his adversary and ignoring his enemy's counsel.

After Cristóbal de Olid's death, Francisco de las Casas governed the people and land. Both he and Gil González remained on their lands, and Las Casas founded the villa of Trujillo on May 18, [15]25. Leaving many things suitably arranged for Cortés, he returned to Mexico by land, taking Gil González de Ávila with him. The Audiencia of Santo Domingo was authorized by the emperor to punish the insolent who stirred up war between Spaniards in the land of Las Higueras. As soon as possible, the Audiencia sent the prosecutor Bachiller Pedro Moreno with letters and power of attorney; however, when Moreno arrived, Olid was already dead and his murderers gone to Mexico. He could do nothing nor knew what to do; rather, they say, he made a better merchant than judge.

[Chapter 174]. How Cortés Left Mexico to Challenge Cristóbal de Olid

Cortés did not rest or cease to express the displeasure he felt in his heart at Cristóbal de Olid for rebelling against him, having been his protegé and friend. He also doubted whether Francisco de las Casas would govern successfully, because Olid had many supporters; therefore, deciding to go to Las Higueras, he informed his friends, prepared his departure, and announced his plans. The king's officials beseeched him not to undertake the journey, since Mexico's safety was more important than that of Las Higueras, and his absence would give the Indians an opportunity to rise up and kill the few Spaniards who remained. From what they heard, (f. 134v) the Indians were ready to do so, for they constantly lamented their fathers' deaths, their lords' imprisonment, and their own captivity. [The officials] bewailed that, if Mexico fell, all the land would be lost. They feared and obeyed Cortés more than everyone else combined and believed that either the emperor or Las Casas, or even time

would surely punish Cristóbal de Olid. Moreover, they told him that it was a long and useless road, and that taking it would trigger civil war among the Spaniards.

Cortés responded that if he did not punish Olid, other despicable men would be encouraged to do the same, which he very much feared, since there were so many captains scattered across New Spain. They might disobey him, following Olid's example and acting so lawlessly that the land would rebel, and neither he, nor they, nor anyone could reclaim it. The officials then ordered him on the emperor's behalf not to go, and he promised to go no farther than to Coatzacoalco and other nearby provinces that had rebelled. He therefore exempted himself from their orders and requests, departing hastily yet prudently. Since he was in charge of all the land's business and of its success or failure, he deliberated and decided with care.

Cortés set about arranging many issues dealing with his government. He ordered that the Indians continue to be converted with all the necessary zeal. He wrote the councils and encomenderos to hurl down all the idols. In order to keep everyone content, he gave repartimientos to the king's officials and to many others. He named the treasurer, Alonso de Estrada, and the accountant Rodrigo de Albornoz, as lieutenant governors, since they seemed equal to the task; and left Licenciado Alonso Zuazo in charge of judicial matters. So that Gonzalo de Salazar and Peralmíndez Chirinos would not resent these appointments, he took them with him. He left Francisco de Solís as captain of the artillery and alcaide of the shipyards and the brigantines very well stocked with plenty of weapons and munitions in case something happened. He agreed to bring with him all the Mexica and Acolhua lords and principales who might stir up the land and, in his absence, create a disturbance. Among them were King **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc, **don Pedro de Alvarado** Coanacochtzin, former lord of Tezcoco; **don Pedro Cortés** Tetlepanquezatl, lord of Tlacopan; **don Carlos** Oquitzin, lord of Azcapotzalco; **don Juan Velázquez Tlacotzin Cihuacoatl**; don **Diego de Alvarado Paintzin, lord of Ecatepec; don Diego de San Francisco Tehuezquititzin Tlacateccatl; don Hernando Cortés Ixtlilxochitzin, prince of Tetzcoco; and don Andrés Motelchiuhtzin Huiznahuatl**[436] **of Mexicaltzinco.** Had they remained, these very powerful men would certainly have contributed to a revolution.

Once the arrangements were made, Cortés left Mexico in October of

436. Don Andrés Motelchiuhtzin was interim ruler of Mexico Tenochtitlan for five years. In 12-Rabbit, 1530, he was shot with arrows and killed by Chichimeca in Teocolhuacan. *CC*, 1:169–71.

1524, (f. 135) thinking everything would turn out well. However, everything turned out wrong, save for the conversion of the Indians, which was massive and well carried out, as we will describe below in detail.

[Chapter 175]. How Cortés's Lieutenants Rebelled Against Him in Mexico

When Cortés left the city, Alonso de Estrada[437] and Rodrigo de Albornoz[438] grew angry and began to quarrel over their authority and rule. One day, while in session they came to blows over the appointment of an alguacil. Little by little, they ceased to carry out their offices as they should have. The cabildo wrote to Cortés two or three times, but as he received the letters while on the road, he offered no solution other than to rebuke their error and foolishness, warning that if they did not change their ways and behave they would be removed from their posts and punished. Despite Cortés's admonitions, they continued to quarrel, their fights and hatred escalating. Estrada, who acted as if he were a prince, disdained Albornoz; and Albornoz, who believed he was an honorable man, did not permit himself to be denigrated. Since they persevered in their fighting, unsettling both the Indians and the Spaniards, the city immediately asked Cortés to return to resolve the quarrel and to pacify the residents.

Having made up his mind not to abandon his journey and enterprise, Cortés gave his factor Gonzalo de Salazar and the inspector Peralmíndez Chirinos de Úbeda the same powers of attorney that the other two had, so that all four could govern equally. At the same time, he gave them a secret power of attorney so they alone, together with Licenciado Zuazo,[439] would be governors, revoking and suspending the authority of Alonso de Estrada and Rodrigo de Albornoz, if necessary, and punishing them if they were guilty. Although given by Cortés for a good cause, this secret power of attorney created great animosity and revolts among the king's officials, resulting in a civil war in which countless Spaniards died, and Mexico was almost lost. Salazar and Chirinos received the powers of attorney and specific instructions. They bid farewell to Cortés at the

437. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 334, states that Estrada boasted that he was the illegitimate son of Ferdinand V. He came to New Spain as royal treasurer, then served as lieutenant governor, and finally succeeded Marcos de Aguilar as justicia mayor along with Sandoval.

438. Thomas, *Conquest*, 574, notes that Albornoz was appointed accountant to assist Cortés with the governance of New Spain.

439. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 398–99, notes that Zuazo had a long career as an adjudicator in Spain, Hispaniola, Cuba, and New Spain before returning to Santo Domingo to serve as oidor of the Real Audiencia.

Villa del Espíritu Santo, although not by the grace of the Holy Spirit,[440] and returned to Mexico.

[The two] governed by themselves, excluding the others. They ordered an inquiry and investigation against Estrada and Albornoz, taking them prisoners. Licenciado Alonso Zuazo was sent on a mule train in manacles and chains to Veracruz, where he was put on a ship to Cuba to give account at a residencia. After this, they committed worse offenses than had Estrada and Albornoz. They acted similarly with others, behaving with any who did not please them as if there were no king or God. Believing that Cortés would never return to Mexico, and despite announcing that they were in the emperor's service, they were so avaricious that they imprisoned Rodrigo de Paz,[441] Cortés's cousin, *mayordomo mayor*, "chief chamberlain," and alguacil mayor of Mexico. They applied the cruelest torture to make him reveal the location of the treasure, and as he would not confess, since he did not have or know of it, they hanged him.

Salazar and Chirinos also took Cortés's houses, with their artillery, weapons, clothing, and everything else inside, an act that was perceived as wrong by the entire city. Because of this they were later sentenced to death, (f. 135v) but not executed by order of Oidores and Licenciados Juan de Salmerón, Quiroga, Ceínos, and Maldonado under the authority of President Sebastián Ramírez de Fuenleal, bishop of Santo Domingo, and that of the Council of the Indies in Spain. Much later, under Viceroy don Antonio de Mendoza and the Audiencia of Mexico, they were sentenced to pay for the artillery and everything they removed from Cortés's houses. These good governors governed as dissolutely as absolutely, and with things in such a state, the men of Oaxaca and Coatlan rebelled and killed fifty Spaniards and eight or ten thousand Indian slaves that worked in the mines. Peralmíndez Chirinos set off with two hundred Spaniards and with one hundred on horseback, attacking the Indians so fiercely that, seeking protection among five or six boulders, they gathered under a very large and strong one, with all their belongings and gold. Chirinos encircled and besieged them for forty days, as they had a gold serpent, many shields [LdeG: necklaces], fans, precious stones, and other rich jewels. One night, however, without Chirinos hearing them, they disappeared with all their treasure.

Gonzalo de Salazar had himself publicly proclaimed and trumpeted governor and captain general of the lands of New Spain. Given the circumstances, Cortés was advised to come with Captain Francisco de

440. A pun by LdeG on the villa's name and the two men's behavior.

441. Ibid., 372, adds that Paz had served as Cortés's secretary and mayordomo and then as regidor in Mexico City.

Medina, but the captain had been most cruelly killed by the men of Xicalanco, who stuck splinters of kindling wood in his body, burning him little by little and making him walk around a pit, which is one of their ceremonies for human sacrifice. They killed other Spaniards in his company and the Indians who were their guides and servants. Cortés then called for Diego de Ordaz, who hurriedly followed Medina but turned back when he saw how Medina had been killed. So they would not take him for a coward, or thinking that Cortés had been killed at the hands of the Indians, Ordaz reported that Cortés was dead, a statement that caused much havoc. Because they had heard of the great travail and danger that Cortés and his men had experienced, all in the city believed the bad news. Many women mourned their husbands for dead, and some of Cortés's own relatives, friends, and servants held funeral services for him. Juana de Manzilla, the wife of Juan Valiente, reported that Cortés was alive. When Gonzalo de Salazar heard this, he had her whipped publicly through the main streets of the city, an ignominy that not even a fool would commit. When Cortés came, he restored her honor, carrying her behind him on horseback and calling her doña Juana. In some later songs that imitated those of the Provincial,[442] it was said that earning the title of doña from her whipped back was as improbable as forming a nose from her arm.

Attracted by Mexico's fabled riches, six or seven merchant ships came to Medellín at that time to sell their merchandise. Gonzalo de Salazar and the rest of the royal officials wished to send monies with the merchants to the emperor, which were crucial to their objectives, and write to the Council of the Indies and Cobos to defend their interests. But there was at least one person who advised against it, saying it should not be done without the approval and letters from Governor Hernando Cortés. At this time, Francisco de las Casas arrived with Gil González de Ávila, and since he was a proud and courageous man, and Cortés's brother-in-law, he strongly opposed Salazar and the others, and even assaulted them one day, mistreating Rodrigo (f. 136) de Albornoz. He had the anchors and sails removed from the ships at Medellín so they could not send to Spain the accounts that he called false, mendacious, and prejudicial. But the factor Salazar, who was deceitful, captured de las Casas along with Gil González. He began proceedings against them for the murder of Cristóbal de Olid, for the disobedience and disdain de las Casas showed him, for what happened with the ships, and because he obstructed his

442. The "Coplas del Provincial" are satirical-political verses that circulated anonymously in the fifteenth century. See Julio Rodríguez Puértolas, *Poesía crítica y satírica del siglo XV* (Madrid, 1981).

designs. [Salazar] sentenced them to death, and had it not been for some convincing advocates, he would have beheaded them, despite their appeal to the emperor.

Even so, Salazar sent them as prisoners to Spain with the proceedings and sentence on a ship owned by Juan Bono de Quexo. At the same time, he sent 12,000 castellanos in gold bars and jewels with his servant Juan de la Peña. But fortune willed the caravel to sink off Fayal Island, which is one of the Azores. Although the letters, proceedings, and documents were lost, the men and gold were saved.

[Chapter 176]. The Imprisonment of the Factor and the Inspector

As Gonzalo de Salazar thus triumphed in Mexico and Peralmíndez Chirinos on the boulder I mentioned [LdeG: Martín Dorantes, Cortés's footman, arrived in the city from Zoatlan. He brought many letters]. [He also brought] powers of attorney from the governor to retain Francisco de las Casas and Pedro de Alvarado as governors and to remove the factor and the inspector from their posts in order to punish them. He entered San Francisco church without being seen. When he learned from the friars that Francisco de las Casas had been sent to Spain as prisoner, he secretly called Rodrigo de Albornoz and Alonso de Estrada, handing over Cortés's letters. On reading them, they called all those on Cortés's side, who then, on behalf of the emperor, elected Alonso de Estrada as Cortés's lieutenant, since neither Pedro de Alvarado nor Francisco de las Casas, for whom the powers were intended, was present.

The news that Cortés was alive spread quickly and joyfully throughout the city, and many came out of their houses to see and speak with Dorantes. With the rejoicing from this good news, Mexico seemed like an entirely different city than before. Courageously anticipating the people's rage, Gonzalo de Salazar spoke with many men, so great was his need not to be forsaken. He placed artillery at the door of one of Cortés's houses, where he lived after he hanged Rodrigo de Paz, and fortified with up to two hundred Spaniards. Alonso de Estrada attacked the house with his entire company. The two hundred Spaniards, on seeing all the city come at them, decided it was better to go over to Cortés's side (since he was alive) than to remain with the factor. In order not to be killed, they began to leave him and climb out [LdeG: the windows into the house's corridors. Among the first to climb out was don Luis]. Only twelve or fifteen men, probably Guzman's servants, remained with the factor, who nevertheless did not lose his spirit. Even before he noted every one abandoning him, he buoyed up

those who remained and began his resistance. He himself lit a cannon with a firebrand but hit nothing, however, since his adversaries dodged the cannonball. Then, Estrada and his men attacked and entered the house, capturing the factor in a chamber where he was hiding. He was put in chains, not without insults and invectives, and dragged through the square and streets so everyone could see him. They placed him in a cell under strong surveillance, and later Estrada and (f. 136v) Albornoz moved into Cortés's house.

[Before these events], Estrada had opposed Factor Salazar openly, but Albornoz behaved deviously, for people affirm that he left San Francisco to speak with the factor, promising he would be neither for nor against him, but wished to promote peace. As he was returning, Albornoz encountered Estrada, who had been on his way to attack Cortés's house. Albornoz asked to be dismounted from his mule and given a horse and weapons for him and his servants, so it would look as if Estrada forced him to fight in case the factor won. Peralmíndez Chirinos ceased waging war as soon as he learned that Cortés was alive and his power to govern revoked. He headed toward Mexico with his men as soon as he could to aid his friend Gonzalo de Salazar. Before he arrived, however, he learned that Salazar had been captured and imprisoned, so he went to Tlaxcala and hid in the monastery of San Francisco, thinking to escape from Alonso de Estrada and Cortés's men. When the news reached Mexico, they sent for Peralmíndez Chirinos, bringing him back and jailing him next to his companion, despite his having sought sanctuary in the church.

With the two men imprisoned, the scandal subsided and Estrada and Albornoz governed peacefully on behalf of the emperor and the town. However, plotting together, some friends and servants of Gonzalo de Salazar and Peralmíndez Chirinos fixed a date to murder Albornoz and Estrada. Although they intended to have the guards release all the prisoners beforehand, they could not carry out their plans, since the governors kept the keys themselves, and it was impossible to break into the cells, which were made of very thick beams, without the plotters being heard and captured. Promising him great things, they therefore let in on their secret a man named Guzmán, who was the son of a locksmith from Seville who made crossbow stocks. As Guzmán was a good man and close to Cortés, he soon learned who and how many the plotters were in order to denounce them. So they would not suspect him, he promised to furnish keys, files, and picklocks as necessary, begging them to inform him daily of what was happening, as he wanted to ensure that the prisoners were freed and not killed. Since they were foolish and careless, they believed him, coming and going often to his shop. Guzmán revealed the

affair and gave the names of the plotters to the governors, who placed spies among them to confirm his story.

The governors gave orders to capture and jail those responsible for the scheme. They were sentenced after confessing that it was true they had wanted to free their masters and kill Albornoz and Estrada. [The authorities] hanged the leader, a man by the name of Escobar, and the others. They cut off some men's hands, others' feet, whipped still others, and expelled many from the land. In the end, all received stern punishment and, therefore, no one remained to stir up the city or disturb Alonso de Estrada's government. This civil war among the Spaniards in Mexico occurred just as I tell it in Hernando Cortés's absence. Rather, it was the emperor's officials who were guilty of starting it. Whenever Cortés departed, none of his soldiers abandoned his mandate and commission, nor was there even the smallest commotion like in the past. It was a wonder the Indians did not rebel then, although, having equipment and even weapons, they gave signs of it. But they were waiting for **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc to issue the order to rebel (f. 137) after killing Cortés on the road, as he had planned, and as will be told later.

[Chapter 177]. The People Cortés Took to Las Higueras

After dispatching Gonzalo de Salazar and Peralmíndez Chirinos from the Villa del Espíritu Santo with powers of attorney to govern Mexico, Cortés informed the lords of Tabasco and Xicalanco of his arrival and that he wished to take a particular route. He asked them to send some men who knew the coast and the land. The lords sent ten of the most honorable people in their towns, along with trustworthy merchants, who gave him a map painted on woven cotton after hearing Cortés's plans. On it, they had depicted the roads from Xicalanco to Naco[443] and Nito,[444] where the Spaniards were, and even to Nicaragua, on the South Sea and to the place where Pedrarias [Dávila], governor of Tierra Firme, resided. The painting was something to see, for it contained all the rivers and sierras one passes through and all the major towns and inns where they rest when they go to the various markets.

They told him that, since the Spaniards who had traveled through that land had burned the towns, the Indians fled to the mountains and there were no longer as many markets held in those cities. Cortés

443. Chamberlain, *Conquest*, map 1, shows Naco to be inland, southeast of Nito.

444. Robert Chamberlain, *The Conquest and Colonization of Yucatan, 1517–1550* (Washington, DC, 1948), map 1, locates Nito in Higueras on the coast of the Bay of Honduras, near the Río Dulce.

thanked them, giving them some trinkets for their efforts and for the information he was seeking. He marveled at how well informed they were about such distant lands. Having acquired a guide and an interpreter, he paraded his men and counted one hundred and fifty horses and a similar number of Spaniards on foot, all prepared for war. They had three thousand Indians and women to serve them. He brought a herd of pigs, animals very used to travel and work and that multiply quickly. He outfitted three caravels with four pieces of artillery he brought from Mexico, great quantities of maize, beans, fish, and other provisions, many weapons and supplies, and all the wine, oil, vinegar, and cured meats he had brought from Veracruz and Medellín. He sent the ships to sail along the coast to the Río Tabasco, taking the route by land, but not wishing to distance himself from the sea. Nine leagues from Villa del Espíritu Santo he crossed a large river by boat and entered Tunalan. Nine leagues farther, with the horses swimming across, he forded another river called Aquiahuilco. Afterward, he came upon a river so wide that, to keep the horses from drowning, he built a wooden bridge one half league from the seashore that measured nine hundred and thirty-four pasos. Although the construction tired them, the Indians were amazed by its structure.

In the thirty-five leagues it took to reach Copilco, the capital of the province, Cortés crossed fifty rivers and marsh outlets and had to build about as many bridges; otherwise, they could not pass. The land is well populated, although low lying, with many marshes and lagoons because of the elevated coastline and riverbanks, and thus the Indians travel by canoe. It is rich in cacao and abundant in bread, fruit, and fish. The route served them well, as this friendly land was apportioned among the Spaniards who were residents of Villa del Espíritu Santo. From Anaxaxuca, the farthest town subject to Copilco on the way to Cihuatlan, Cortés traversed many dense mountains (f. 137v) and a very large and broad river called Queçatlapan, which is a tributary of the Río Tabasco, called Grijalva. By means of the river, he obtained provisions from the large caravels, crossing it with twenty small boats brought by two hundred men from Tabasco. One of his men, a black, drowned, and up to four arrobas of hardware sank, which were sorely missed. I believe that this is where an inebriated Juan Jaramillo married Marina **Tenepal**. [The men] blamed Cortés for allowing it, despite his having had children with her.[445] They fled, and in the twenty days that Cortés was there, they

445. We know of only one child, don Martín Cortés, that Cortés had with Malintzin, but it is entirely possible they had others. For information about the life of don Martín, see Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices*.

never returned nor did he find anyone to show him the way, save for two men and some women. They told him that their lord and all his men were in the mountains and inlets, and that they knew only how to travel by boat. When he asked whether they were familiar with Chilapan on the painting, they pointed to a mountain about ten leagues away. Cortés built a bridge measuring three hundred pasos with beams thirty and forty feet long. He crossed a great marsh, as he could not leave the town without going through the water.

The next day, after sleeping on high [LdeG: and dry] ground, Cortés entered Chilapan, which had been a large and well-settled town, before it was burned and destroyed.[446] There he found only two men, who guided him to Tamaztepec, known also as Tecpetlican. Earlier, he crossed a river named Chilapan and, as before, another slave drowned and much cargo was lost. It took him two days to advance six leagues, as the horses had water and mud up to their knees and even their bellies in many places. The men faced extreme danger and tribulation, with three Spaniards drowning. Although Tamaztepec was desolate, our men stayed there six days. They found fruit and green maize in the fields and maize grain in silos, which offered sufficient food and refreshment for the men and horses, and it was a wonder that the pigs also reached the place. From there, he took two days to reach Iztapan[447] through marshes and horrible quagmires, in which the horses sank to their cinches. When the people from the town saw the men on horseback, they fled, since the lord of Cihuatlan had told them that the Spaniards killed whomever they encountered. [The natives] even burned many of their houses, taking their women and few belongings to the other side of the river that courses through the town. Some drowned in their hurry, and others, when captured, said they had acted out of the fear instilled in them by what the lord of Cihuatlan had told them.

Cortés then called the men he brought from Cihuatlan, Chilapan, and Tlamaztepec to tell how well he had treated them. In front of a prisoner, he gifted them with small trinkets, giving them license to return home and letters to show the Christians who came through their lands so they would be safe. Happy with this, they assured the people of Iztapan and called their lord, who came with forty men to submit to the emperor and fed our army well during the eight days it stayed there. Cortés asked for twenty women; they were captured at the river and handed over to him. While Cortés was there, a Mexica ate the leg of an Indian [LdeG: from

446. Gerhard, *Southeast Frontier*, 35, states that communities of both Chontal and Nahuatl speakers resided in the Chilapa and Usumacinta basins.

447. Ibid. adds that Iztapa was one of several communities upstream on the banks of the Río Usumacinta. LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 347, has Ixtapa.

that town] who had been knifed to death. Learning of this, he had the Mexica burned in the lord's presence (f. 138). The lord wished to know the reason, so Cortés made a long pronouncement and sermon through the interpreter, telling him he had come [LdeG: to those parts] on behalf of the best and most powerful prince in the world, whom all in the land acknowledged as their monarch, and that he should do so as well. He came to punish the evil men who ate the flesh of other men, like that Mexica, and to teach the law of Christ that commanded the belief in and worship of one god and not many idols. He also came to notify men of the devil's intent to deceive them in order to take them to hell, where they would be tormented with terrible and everlasting fire. He spoke of the many mysteries of our holy Catholic faith, tempting the lord with paradise and leaving him very content and astonished at everything he had said.

The lord gave Cortés three canoes to send downstream to Tabasco with three Spaniards with instructions on what the large caravels must do and how they should await him at the Bahía de la Ascención. The caravels and other ships were to take meat and bread from the boats to Acalan[448] through an estuary. At the same time, he gave Cortés another three canoes and men, all of whom went upstream with some Spaniards to pacify the land and level the road, which was no mean show of friendship. Some vile rumors began to spread from there to Mexico that Cortés would never return, thus provoking Gonzalo de Salazar and Peralmíndez Chirinos to reveal their evil intentions.

[Chapter 178]. On the Priests of Tatahuitlapan[449]

Cortés left Iztapan for Tatahuitlalpan, where he found only twenty men, who were most likely priests, in a very large and well-decorated temple on the other side of the river. The priests said they had remained there to die with their gods, who told them that the bearded men killed deities. This was because Cortés always broke the idols and set up crosses. When they saw the Mexica carrying some adornments taken from the idols, they cried that they no longer wished to live as their gods were dead. Cortés and the two Franciscans then advised them through the interpreters, as they had done with the lord of Iztapan, to leave their mad and evil faith. They responded that they wished to die under the law of their fathers and grandfathers. The main priest among the twenty showed them the site of Tatahuitlalpan as it was painted on the cloth, saying he

448. Gerhard, *Southeastern Frontier*, 118, refers to a kingdom, or confederation, of Acalan, whose ruler controlled the trade, mostly via canoes, between Tabasco and Honduras.
449. Tatahuitlalpan (and hereinafter) in ibid., 348–49.

did not know how to travel by land (an incredible simplemindedness, but it allowed them to live content and without worry).

Shortly after departing, the army crossed a marsh about half a league wide, a deep estuary, over which it was necessary to build a bridge, and farther down the road, another marsh one league wide. Because the marsh was firm underneath, the horses traversed it with less effort, although the water reached the cinches and, at the lowest level, their knees. They entered a forest so dense that all they could see was the sky above and the ground they walked on. The trees were so tall that they could not be climbed as vantage points from which to observe the land. Wandering about for two days, they noticed grass at the edge of a swamp where the horses could graze. That night they ate and slept little. Some thought that they would die before reaching a town. Cortés took the compass and navigation chart he carried for emergencies, and remembering the area that had been pointed out to him in Tatahuitlalpan, he found that by taking a northeast direction they would arrive at Huatecpan or very near there. They labored hard to open the road. (f. 138v) Following that direction, God willed it that they ended up in that very place, exhausted. However, they refreshed themselves with fruit and much more to eat and the horses likewise with green maize and grass from the riverbank, which is very wide.

The place was deserted, and Cortés could not find a sign of the three ships or the Spaniards he had sent upstream. Walking about the town, he found a crossbow arrow stuck in the ground, by which he realized they had passed through there or had been killed by the locals. Some Spaniards crossed the river in small boats, looking for people in the orchards and farmlands. After a while, they saw a large lake where all the townspeople had gathered in boats and on islets, many of whom came out to greet them laughing and happy. About forty people came, telling Cortés that they had left the town because of the lord of Cihuatlan. They added that some bearded men had crossed the river upstream with men from Iztapan who assured them of how well the foreigners treated the natives. They explained that one of the lord's brothers had gone with them and others armed in four canoes so they would not be attacked in the town that was farther upstream.

Cortés sent for the Spaniards; they came the next day with many canoes loaded with honey, maize, cacao, and some gold that lit up everyone's eyes. Others came from four or five towns to bring provisions to the Spaniards and to see for themselves what had been said of them. As a sign of friendship, [the natives] gave them a small amount of gold, and everyone wished it were more. Cortés treated them with reverence and begged them to become friends of the Christians. Promising to do so,

they left their houses, burning many of their idols because of what had been preached, while the lord distributed some of his gold among the Spaniards.

[Chapter 179]. The Bridge Built by Cortés

On the road from Huatecpan toward the province of Acalan, Cortés took a small path made by merchants, for, as they say, few others walk from one town to another. He crossed the river on boats, at which time a horse drowned and several bundles were lost. He walked three days through dense forests, tiring the army, and then came upon a lake five hundred pasos wide, which gave our men trouble, since they had no boats nor could they touch bottom. With tears streaming, they cried out for mercy, as it seemed that they could cross it only by flying overhead, yet to go back, as the majority wished, would mean their death. The heavy rains had washed out the bridges they built. Cortés climbed into a small boat with two Spanish sailors who sounded the inlet and the lake. They measured four brazas of water everywhere they sounded. They tried to touch bottom by tying pikes together, finding an additional two brazas[450] of silt and slime and measuring six brazas in depth, with no hope of building a bridge.

Still, Cortés tried to build one; he implored the lords of Mexico he brought with him to order the Indians to fell trees and carve and drag large beams to build a bridge so they could escape from danger. They did so, and the Spaniards lay the wood on the silt over rafts with three canoes, as this was all they had. The bridge caused them so much work and resentment that they reneged from building it, murmuring against the captain (f. 139) for being so mad as to put them in a place where he could not extricate them with all his wit and knowledge. They said that the bridge would never be finished; that when they finished it, they would themselves be finished and, therefore, they should go back before finishing the provisions, since they would have to return anyway without reaching Las Higueras. Cortés never felt so confused, but in order not to anger them, he did not contradict their opinion. He begged them to please wait for five days only; if they did not finish the bridge, he promised to turn back. They responded that they would wait the five days, even if they had to eat stones. Cortés then asked the Indians to consider the great need everyone was in, as they would either have to cross or perish. He encouraged them to work, saying that once they crossed the lake,

450. This is actually *brazada*, "unit of measure the length of two outstretched arms," but here brazas and brazadas are used interchangeably.

they would reach Acalan, a bounteous and friendly land where there were ships with many provisions and drink.

Cortés promised great things when they returned to Mexico, if they all finished the bridge. The lords agreed, saying it pleased them, and they divided up into crews, some to dig roots and pick herbs and fruits from the land for food; others, to fell trees; some to carve them into beams; and still others, to sink them in the lake. Cortés was the major master builder of the work, applying so much care, and they so much work that within six days the bridge was built, and on the seventh, the entire army with the horses crossed it. It seemed that it could not have been done without God's help, and the Spaniards were much in awe and even did their fair share, since even though they spoke ill of others, they worked well. Although the bridge's design was not uncommon, the Indians' construction was, for they brought into the town one thousand beams eight brazas in length and five or six palmos in width and many other minor and smaller woods for the flooring. The bridge was held together with vines, since there were no nails; they had only horseshoe nails and wooden pegs inserted in drill holes.

The men's happiness in crossing the lake safely lasted only a short while, as they soon ran into a horrible marsh, although not too wide, where the horses, even with their saddles removed, sank to their ears, and the more they struggled, the more they sank. They lost all hope of saving the horses, but still they placed bundles of branches and grass under their chests and bellies to keep them afloat, which, while it helped somewhat, was not enough. At that point, a channel opened to let the water pass, and the horses swam, but they were so tired they could not stand. The men gave thanks to our Lord for his great mercy, as they would be lost without horses. Meanwhile, four Spaniards who had gone ahead returned with eighty Indians from the province of Acalan carrying fowl, fruit, and bread. God only knows how greatly all were pleased, in particular when it was learned that Apoxpalon, lord of the province and the rest of this people, was awaiting their army in peace. They looked forward with good will to meeting Cortés and lodging him in their homes. Some Indians gave Cortés small trinkets of gold from their lord, saying that he was very pleased that Cortés had come to his land, since he had heard of him for many years from the merchants of Xicalanco and Tabasco.

Cortés thanked them for their good will, giving them small items from Spain to take to their lord. (f. 139v) He showed them the bridge and sent them back with the same [four] Spaniards. They marveled at the bridge as much for its large size as because there are no such works there and because they believed nothing was impossible for the Spaniards. The next day, Cortés's men reached Tizapetl, where the residents had prepared

great quantities of food for them and much grain, grass, and flowers for the horses. They rested there for six days to compensate for all their hard work [LdeG: and hunger]. A young man of good disposition came to visit Cortés well accompanied, saying he was Apoxpalon's son. Bringing many hens and some gold, he offered his person and land, pretending that his father had died. Cortés consoled him, feigning sadness but suspecting he was not telling the truth, for the father was alive four days earlier and had sent a gift. Begging him not to leave so soon, Cortés gave him a bead necklace from Flanders that he was wearing, which the young man appreciated very much.

[Chapter 180]. On Apoxpalon, Lord of Yzancanac[451]

From Tizapetl, they went to Teoticaccac, six leagues from where the lord had graciously received them. They took up residence in the [LdeG: two] temples, which are many and very beautiful. The major temple was dedicated to a goddess to whom lovely young virgins were sacrificed. They said that she became angry if no sacrifices were made, so they selected the girls at an early age to be reared in great comfort. Cortés communicated to them as best he could how a Christian should behave and what the king ordered. When he hurled down the idols, the townspeople showed little emotion. The lord of Teoticaccac held long conversations with the Spaniards, growing to befriend and love Cortés. He gave him more information about the Spaniards Cortés was seeking and about the route he should take. He told Cortés in secret that Apoxpalon was indeed alive, but wanted to take him on a detour that, while a good route, would bypass his towns and riches. The lord begged Cortés to keep the secret if he wished to see him alive with his wealth and estate intact.

Cortés thanked the lord, promising not only to keep his secret but to behave as an friend to him. He then called the young man I mentioned to interrogate him. Since he could not deny the truth, he confessed that his father was alive and, obeying Cortés's wish, he went for him, bringing him on the second day. Ashamed, Apoxpalon gave many excuses, saying he so feared the strange men and animals that he had acted in this manner to see if they were good and would not destroy his towns. As he now realized they did not harm anyone, he invited them to Itzancanac, the populous city where he resided. Cortés left the next day, giving Apoxpalon a horse to ride, which pleased him greatly, although he at first thought he would fall from it. They were very well received in the town.

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451. Itzancanac (and hereinafter).

Cortés and Apoxpalon stayed in a house large enough to accommodate the Spaniards and their horses, while the Mexica were distributed among several houses. The lord fed them very well all the time they were there. He gave Cortés some gold and twenty women. He also furnished them with a canoe and men to take them (f. 140) downstream to the sea, where the large caravels were moored. A Spaniard had recently arrived from Santi Esteban de Pánuco with letters and four Indians carrying letters from Medellín, Villa del Espíritu Santo, and Mexico, written before Gonzalo de Salazar and Peralmíndez Chirinos had arrived. With him, Cortés sent word that he was all right, despite many difficulties. He also wrote to the Spaniards on the large caravels, telling them what to do and where they should meet him.

They say that it is the custom in Acalan to elevate the richest merchant to the status of lord, and Apoxpalon had become one for this reason. He maintained an extensive trade on land in cotton, cacao, slaves, salt, and small quantities of gold alloyed with copper and with other substances. He traded in red seashells with which the Indians adorned themselves and their idols, resin, and other incense for the temples, kindling wood for lighting, colors and dyes with which to paint themselves for war and festivities and to protect themselves from heat and cold, and many other kinds of merchandise they esteem and need. In many market towns such as Nito, Apoxpalon appointed a factor; a neighborhood was also populated by his vassals and servants who traded. Apoxpolon showed himself a very good friend of the Spaniards. He built a bridge so they could pass over a marsh, offered them canoes to traverse an inlet, and sent many guides with them who were familiar with the route. In return, all he asked was a letter stating that he was Cortés's friend, for protection in case some Spaniards passed by there. Acalan is a very populated and rich town, and Itzancanac, a large city.

[Chapter 181]. The Death of **don Hernando de Alvarado** Quauhtemoc

Cortés kept **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc and many other Mexica lords with him so they would not stir up the city and land, along with three thousand Indians for service and portage. Distressed because he was under guard and yet a king, **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc noticed that the Spaniards were far from receiving any help, weakened by their travails, and in unfamiliar territory. He thought of killing them, Cortés especially, to avenge himself and return to Mexico to proclaim his freedom and become again the king he once was. He colluded with the other

lords and the Mexica so that on the same day they would kill the Spaniards who were there, since they numbered no more than two hundred **and fifty** and had no more than fifty horses, and all were fighting among themselves and divided into factions. If he carried out his idea, it would work well because Cortés had few Spaniards with him, and the few he had in Mexico were quarreling. Their ranks were diminished because some had gone with Alvarado to Guatemala, some with Las Casas to Las Higueras, and some to the mines of Michoacan.

The Mexica planned what they would do on seeing the Spaniards negligent or fighting among themselves, and on Quauhtemoc's second command.[452] They made a great noise at night with their drums, bones, conch shells, and horns. Since the noise was louder and more frequent than before, the Spaniards became suspicious, asking the reason. They maintained their guard, I do not know whether they saw signs or were told, but they always went out (f. 140v) armed. Even in the processions that Cortés ordered, the Spaniards had their horses at their side, saddled and bridled. Mexicaltzinco **or Coztemexi (**who afterward was called Cristóbal**)**, revealed to Cortés **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc's conspiracy and dealings, showing him a piece of paper with the drawings and names of the lords who plotted [Cortés's] death. Cortés praised Mexicaltzinco **or Coztemexi** highly, promising great favors, and he took prisoner ten [LdeG: of those] who were painted on the paper, without the one knowing about the other. He asked them how many there were in the group, saying to each that the others had already told him.

(According to Cortés**)**, no one could deny the truth, and thus everyone confessed that **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc, **don Pedro de Alvarado** Coanacochtzin, and **don Pedro** Tetlepanquetzatl were the leaders of the conspiracy. Although the rest were in agreement, they had not truly consented nor were they present at the discussion. They added that to obey one's lord and desire one's liberty and estate was no error or sin. It seemed to them that there was no better place or time to kill him, as he had few companions and no friends. They concluded that they did not fear the Spaniards who were in Mexico because they were recently arrived and inexperienced in weaponry and riven by factionalism and war **(**which Cortés came to suspect**)**, but since the gods did not wish for them to kill Cortés, then Cortés should kill them.

On their confession, Cortés initiated proceedings against them and shortly afterward, **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc, Tlacatlec or

452. An alternative translation of the original (*Los de Mexico se concertaron [. . .] para el segundo mandamiento de Quauhtemoc*) would be: "The Mexica planned what they would do [. . .] once Moteuczoma regained his kingdom."

Tlacateccatl, and **don Pedro** Tetlepanquetzatl were hanged by due process. The others' punishment was their own fear and terror. Certainly, all believed they would be killed and burned because their kings had been hanged. They believed that Cortés had not been told by any human, but by the compass and navigation chart, and they took as the truth that no one could hide any thoughts from him. Since he had been right about the plot and the route to Huatecpan, many came to tell him to look in the mirror **(**as they call the compass**),** and he would see that they had good will toward him and no evil intentions. He and all the Spaniards made them believe these notions as truth to frighten them. The execution was carried out in Itzancanac during Lent in the year 1525.

Quauhtemoc ruled Mexico Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco for four years. Cortés then appointed in his place don Juan Velázquez Tlacotzin Cihuacoatl as lord of Mexico Tenochtitlan, although he never returned to rule, because he governed the Mexica for no more than one year and one month. He died at a place called Achiyotlan on the road he had taken on his way to Mexico, for Cortés was returning [to Mexico City]**, as we shall soon see. Before being appointed to this office, the aforementioned don Juan Velázquez Cihuacoatl was president of the Supreme Council, or main judge and captain general of the royal court in Mexico, as had been his grandfather, the great Tlacaelel Cihuacoatl.**

According to what this history tells us, **don Hernando** Quauhtemoc (f. 141) was a valiant man. He had strength in adversity and a true heart, both at the beginning of the war for peace and during the siege. He demonstrated these qualities as much when he was captured as when he was hanged, as well as when he was tortured so he would reveal the treasure of **his eldest brother** Moteuczoma. The torture consisted of rubbing oil on his feet many times and putting them to the fire. But, instead of obtaining gold, the Spaniards gained infamy. Cortés should have kept him alive, protected like gold wrapped in cloth, since Quauhtemoc was the triumph and glory of his victories. But Cortés did not wish to have to guard or keep anything in so demanding a land and time. It is true that he held [Quauhtemoc] in high esteem, since the Indians honored him very much out of love and respect. They repaid him with the same reverence and ceremonies that they showed Moteuczoma, and I believe that for this reason, Cortés always took Quauhtemoc with him about the city on horseback if he rode or on foot when he walked. Apoxpalon was shocked at the punishment of such a great king. Out of fear, or because of what Cortés had told him about adoring too many gods, he burned an infinite number of idols in the presence of the Spaniards, promising that he would no longer worship statues and that he would remain Cortés's friend and a subject of his king.

[Chapter 182]. How Canek Burned the Idols

From Itzancanac, which is the cabecera of Acalan, our Spaniards left for the town of Mazatlan (also called something else in another language, but I do not know how it is written and although I have managed to inform myself well of the proper terms and names of the towns where our army camped on the journey to Las Higueras, I am not completely satisfied. Therefore, if some [names] are not pronounced as they should be, no one should be surprised, since the route was taken only once). So he would not run out of provisions, Cortés took food for six days, although he would not stay on the road for more than three or at most four, warned by his previous experience.

He sent four Spaniards ahead with two guides given to him by Apoxpalon. He crossed the marsh and the inlet by bridge and with the canoes that the lord had prepared for them. After Cortés advanced five leagues, the four Spaniards returned, saying there was a good route and much grazing and farmland, which was good news for the men who had earlier encountered roads. He sent skilled runners to capture some of the natives in order to learn their opinion of the Spaniards' departure. They brought back as prisoners two Acalan merchants, or so they seemed from the clothing they brought for sale. They said that in Mazatlan, no one remembered the men, and their town was full of people. Cortés freed those he had brought from Itzancanac, taking the [LdeG: two] merchants as his guides. That night, like the previous one, he slept in a wood; the next day, while exploring the Spaniards encountered four men (f. 141v) from Mazatlan sent as spies with bows and arrows. When they saw the Spaniards, they shot arrows, wounding one of our Indians, and then hid in a wood. The Spaniards ran after them, but capturing only one, they handed him over to the Indians and continued the chase, searching for more. When they saw that the Spaniards had left, the three in hiding attacked our Indians, about the same number, and took the prisoner from them by force. Embarrassed by the affront, our Indians ran after the others to resume the fight. They caught and wounded a man from Mazatlan, stabbing him in the arm with a knife, while the rest fled as the army drew near. The wounded man said that no one in his town knew anything about the bearded men. Their town was not far; as usual, they had come to spy to keep their enemies, who were many in the region, from attacking their town or farmland by surprise.

Cortés pressed on that night to reach the town, but found he could not. Instead, they slept by a marsh in a small hut without any water to drink. At dawn, he covered the marsh with branches and brushwood, so the horses could go straight across with little effort. After traveling for

three leagues, they came to a town built on a crag. Thinking they would encounter resistance, they remained in formation, but the residents had fled out of fear. There they found turkeys, honey, beans, maize, and other provisions in large quantities.

The town is well fortified because it stands on a great cliff, with no more than one gate, but with a level entrance. It is surrounded on one side by a lake and on another by a deep stream that feeds into the lake. It has a deep moat and a wooden parapet measuring up to the chest, topped by a fence of boards and beams two estados high, with openings from which to shoot arrows. There are sentry posts storing many stones and arrows at intervals that raise the fence another estado and one-half. Even the houses are protected by openings and passageways for shooting into the streets. Everything, in sum, was formidable and well planned for the weapons used in that land. Our men were very pleased to see such a strong town abandoned, since it served as a border garrison.

Cortés sent one of the Acalan Indians to call the lord and the people. The governor came, saying that the king was a child and very afraid. He went with [Cortés] to Tiac, which is six leagues from there, but when they arrived, the residents fled to the forest out of fear. Tiac is a major town, but not very strong, as it is on a plain. It has three neighborhoods, each fenced, with a palisade that encircles them all. Cortés could not convince the inhabitants to return, since his army was inside, although they gave him food, some clothing, and a man to guide him. (f. 142) The guide said that he had seen other bearded men and deer **(**this is what they call horses there**)**. Having such a good guide, Cortés paid and gave license to the men from Acalan so they could return to their land, asking them to give his regards to Apoxpalon. From Tiac, he left to sleep at Xoncahuitl, which was also a stronghold and fenced like the others. Although empty of people, the town was full of provisions, and the army loaded up for the five days they would be on the road, which the guide told them was deserted until Taica.

They spent four nights in the sierra, going through a difficult mountain pass they called Alabastro, as its boulders and rocks were made of this material. On the fifth day, they came to a very large lake with a large town on an islet that the guide identified as the head town of the province of Taica. Since the only entry was by boat, the runners captured a native in a canoe, not by their effort so much as by that of a trained dog. The native told them that in the city no one knew of men like them, and if they wished to enter, they should go to the fields near an inlet and take many boats from the farmers. Taking twelve crossbowmen with him, Cortés followed the guide on foot under a large downpour with the water up to his knees and higher. Since the bad road slowed him down

and he could not travel undetected, as soon as the farmers saw him they pushed ahead on the lake in their canoes. He set up camp in the fields, fortifying it as best he could, for the guide warned him that the men from the city were experienced in war and everyone in the region feared them. If he wished, the guide would go in his small canoe to the islet, enter the town, and speak with Canek, lord of Taica, whom he knew from before, to inform him of Cortés's arrival and intentions.

Cortés let the guide take the boat's owner with him; he returned at midnight and not before, owing to the distance between the coast and the town, which was two leagues, and to the bad rowers. He brought two seemingly honorable persons who said they came on behalf of Canek, their lord, to visit the army's captain and to learn what he wanted. Cortés spoke joyfully to them, giving them a Spaniard as hostage so Canek would come to the camp. They returned, extremely pleased at having seen the horses, outfits, and beards of our Spaniards. The next morning, the lord arrived with thirty persons in six canoes, bringing the Spaniard with him with no show of fear or war. Cortés received him with great pleasure, and to celebrate his arrival and demonstrate how Christians honor their god, he had mass sung with great solemnity, and the musicians he brought with him played sackbuts and reed flutes. Canek listened to the music and song with great attention and observed the ceremonies and service at the altar. He seemed to enjoy them, praising the music, which he had never heard. On concluding the divine office, the clerics and friars paid their respects and preached to him through the interpreter. He responded that he would happily destroy his idols and wished to know and learn how to honor and serve their god. When he asked for a cross to place in his town, he was told that they would soon give him one, as they did wherever they went. Although they could not do so immediately, they would soon send him religious to teach him the law of Christ.

After the sermon, Cortés (f. 142v) made a brief pronouncement on the grandeur of the emperor, requesting that Canek become his vassal, as the people of Mexico Tenochtitlan had done. [Canek] responded that from that moment on he regarded himself as one. Several years before, in passing through his land to the markets, the people of Tabasco had told him of some strangers similar to the Spaniards who had persisted in fighting them, but were defeated in three battles. Cortés then told him that he was the very same captain mentioned by the people of Tabasco and to ask the locals to confirm it. At this point, they finished the conversation and sat down to eat. Canek had the canoes unloaded, which were stocked with fowl, fish, [LdeG: cakes], honey, fruit, gold in small quantities, and strings of reddish seashells that they value highly.

Cortés gave him a shirt, a black velvet cap, and small iron items such as scissors and knives, asking whether he knew about some of his Spaniards who could not be far from there on the seacoast. Canek said that he had received news about them from some of his vassals, who were very close to where they were. If he wished, he would have someone take [Cortés] there without losing his way, but that the great mountains were rugged and difficult to pass; if he went by sea, however, it would not be so arduous. Cortés thanked him for the news and advice, saying that the small boats were not adequate to transport horses, bundles, and so many people, and since he was forced to go by land, he needed to know how to cross the lake. Canek stated that three leagues from there he could bypass it, and that while the army went on its way, he should come into the city to see his house and the burning of the idols. Very much against the will of his companions, Cortés left with him, taking twenty crossbowmen, an extreme audacity. To the residents' delight, Cortés spent the afternoon in the town. He saw many idols burned and chose a guide. He asked the residents to look after a horse limping from a stake impaled in its hoof that he had left at camp. He then left to sleep with the army, which had gone around the lake.

[Chapter 183]. A Difficult Road Taken by Our Men

Departing the next day, Cortés traveled flat, good land where the horsemen caught eighteen bucks with lances, as they were plentiful. Two of their horses were so emaciated that they could not endure the hunt, and died. They captured four hunters carrying a dead lion, which surprised our men, who thought it a wonderful thing for four mere men armed only with arrows to kill a lion. They came to a deep, large inlet, from where they could see the place they wished to go. Because they had no means to cross, they waved their capes at the townspeople, who, frightened, were gathering their belongings to flee to the forest. Two men came in a canoe with as many as a dozen turkeys, but they would not join the men on land, although they said they would; but despite being begged, they would not. It was to keep the Spaniards there until the natives finished collecting their belongings and hid. At this time, a Spaniard spurred his horse into the water and swam after the Indians, who became confused and could not row. Other Spaniards arrived, good swimmers, who captured the canoe.

The two Indians guided the army through a detour for one league (f. 143) to bypass the lake. They arrived at the town very tired, for they had traveled eight leagues. Although no one was there, they found sufficient food to eat. The town is called Tlecean and its lord, Amohan.

Our army stayed there four days waiting for the lord or the residents, but since they did not come, it prepared provisions for six days, which was the time specified by three guides to journey through the deserted land. The army departed and went on to sleep six leagues from there at a large inn that belonged to Amohan, where merchants stopped for the night. As it was the feast day of the Mother of God [January 1],[453] they rested one day, fishing in the river. They caught quantities of shad, keeping them all, since besides being nutritious, the fishing was excellent. The next day, they journeyed nine leagues on the plain, killing seven deer. The horses lost their shoes at the mountain pass, which was rough and difficult, with an ascent [LdeG: and descent] of two leagues. In order to shoe the horses, they remained there an entire day.

The next day's journey was to one of Canek's villages, called Axuncapuin, where they stayed for two days. From Axuncapuin, they left to sleep in Taxaitetl, which is one of Amohan's hamlets. There, they found much fruit, green maize, and men who guided them for two leagues, so that the next day they covered two leagues of good road. They climbed a very rough sierra for eight leagues, which took them eight days. Sixty-eight horses fell from cliffs and perished. Those who escaped did not recover in three months, so injured were they. Although it rained day and night all the time, they suffered great thirst. Cortés's nephew broke his leg in three or four places from a fall, and it was very hard to carry him out of the mountains. Their woes were not over, for they came across a large, tumultuous river, cresting with the rains so much that the Spaniards were mightily discouraged, as they did not have boats and even if they had, they would have been useless. It was impossible to build a bridge and to turn back meant certain death.

Cortés sent some Spaniards upriver to see if it narrowed or if it could be waded, and they returned rejoicing at having found a crossing. I cannot tell you how many tears of happiness the Spaniards shed upon hearing such good news; they hugged one another, giving God our Lord many thanks for relieving their anguish. They sang the *Te Deum Laudamus* and a litany, and as it was Holy Week, all confessed. The pass was a slag or rock as large, flat, and smooth as the river was wide and extended over twenty crevices through which the water flowed without covering the rock. It seems like a fiction or an enchantment, such as those from the *Amadís de Gaula*,[454] but it is nevertheless quite true. Others thought it a miracle, but it is a work of nature that either created

453. There may be a discrepancy with this date. See two paragraphs below, where LdeG notes that in a relatively short period of time the Spaniards were celebrating Holy Week.
454. *Amadís de Gaula* is a chivalric romance, published in 1508 in four books by Garci Ordóñez (or Rodríguez) de Montalvo (Çaragoça, 1508).

a way for water to pass; or perhaps the water, with its constant flow, wore down the rock.

The men cut wood from the many trees that grow there, dragging more than two hundred beams and many vines (elsewhere, I say that they serve as ropes), and everyone worked hard. They crossed the canals with the beams, tying them with vines, and in two days, made a bridge. The water made so much noise that, when it went through the rock's crevices, it deafened the men. The horses and pigs swam across downstream, where the water was deeper and calmer. They left to sleep that night at Teucico [LdeG: Teucix], one league from there, (f. 143v) where there are hamlets and farms, and where they captured more than twenty people. But they did not find sufficient food for all, which was a great disappointment, as they were very hungry, having eaten nothing in eight days but small palms with their shriveled dates and greens boiled without salt. The men from Teucix said that upriver, at a day's distance, there was a good town in the province of Tahuican that had many hens, cacao, maize, and other foodstuffs, but that they did not know how to ford the river, which had crested and rushed furiously. Cortés told them that it could certainly be crossed and, asking for a guide, he sent thirty Spaniards and one thousand Indians. They came and went many times, and, although with much work, provided for the army.

While in Teucix, Cortés sent some Spaniards with a native guide to find the route they should take to reach Açuçulin, whose lord is called Aquiahuilquin. At ten leagues, they captured seven men and one woman in a small house that may have been an inn, returning to say that the road was very good compared to the previous one. Among the seven men was a merchant from Acalan who had lived a long time in Nito, where there were Spaniards. He remembered that the year before many bearded men on horseback and on foot entered the city, sacking it and mistreating the residents and merchants. At the time, a brother of Apoxpalon who had a trading post there fled the city, along with all the other merchants. He and many of the men asked Aquiahuilquin for a license to settle and trade in his land, but the markets disappeared and the merchants were ruined when the strangers came. Cortés begged [Apoxpalon] to guide him to the town, promising to pay him handsomely. And since he agreed, [Cortés] released the prisoners, paid the other guides he had brought, and sent them with God. He dispatched four of these seven guides, with two from Teucix, to beseech Aquiahuilquin not to leave town, as he wished to speak with him and not harm him. When it dawned the next day, the man from Acalan and the other three had already gone, so Cortés was left without a guide.

He finally departed, sleeping in a forest five leagues from there, after

injuring a horse on the bad road. The next day the army advanced six leagues, crossing two rivers, one with the help of canoes, but two mares drowned. That night they reached a village with up to twenty new houses that belonged to the Acalan merchants, who had abandoned the site. From there, they went to a depopulated Açuçulin where they could find no food, which doubled their troubles. They searched the land for men with information on how to reach Nito, but found no one in eight days' time save for some poor women. The women were of no help; rather, they caused problems, for one said that she would take them to a town two days' journey from there, where they would be given the information they needed. Some Spaniards went with her, but finding no one in the town, returned dejected. Cortés was desperate; as much as he searched the desolate water and mountains before him, he could not determine which route he had to take. A young boy passing through the forest was captured, and he guided them to some farms in the land of Tuniha, one of the provinces painted on the map they carried. He arrived in two days, and afterward an old man **(**who could not flee**)** guided them another two days to a town where they captured four men, as the rest had fled out of fear (f. 144). The men said that Nito and the Spaniards were at two days' distance. So they would be believed, one man brought two native women from Nito, who named the Spaniards they had served. The news relieved them greatly, for they feared dying from hunger in the land of Tuniha, as they had been eating only small raw palms or cooked with fresh unsalted pork, and they never tired even of this. It took two men one day to cut down a palm and only half an hour to eat the shoot that grows on top. Juan de Ávalos, one of Cortés's cousins, tumbled down a sierra on his horse on the last days of the trip, breaking his arm.

[Chapter 184]. What Cortés Accomplished in Nito

As soon as he learned the distance to Nito, Cortés dispatched fifteen Spaniards with one of the four men to search for a Spaniard or Indian from the town who would tell them whose and how many men they were. The fifteen Spaniards wandered about until they came upon a wide river. Seizing a canoe from Indian merchants, they waited for two days until a boat came with four **Indians** [LdeG: Spaniards] fishing, whom they captured without being heard by the townspeople. The captured Spaniards told them that there were sixty Spaniards and twenty women, most of them ill, in the town. They were Gil Gonzáles's people and had Diego Nieto as their captain. Cristóbal de Olid had been murdered by Francisco de las Casas and Gil Gonzáles, who had already left for Mex-

ico, crossing the lands and jurisdiction of Pedro de Alvarado. God knows how much this news gladdened Cortés. He informed Diego Nieto of his whereabouts, asking him to have some canoes ready to cross the river, and left shortly thereafter. It took Cortés three days to reach Nito, and his army five days to cross the river, as the only boats available were a skiff and one or two canoes.

All were greatly relieved when Cortés arrived, for those on route could no longer walk and those in the town were ill and without food. Obliged to provision so many people, Cortés sent men to search in several directions, but they returned with nothing to show for their effort, except frustration.[455] On their second try, the men found at sea only a principal merchant with his four slaves in canoes. There were so many to feed and the food so scarce that all were dying of hunger, and they certainly would have died were it not for some pigs that still remained and the wild plants and roots gathered by the Mexica. But God, who forgets no one, willed that a ship put in at that time with thirty Spaniards, not counting the sailors, thirteen horses, seventy-five pigs, twelve casks of salted meat, and many cargas of maize. Giving thanks to Jesus Christ, everyone filled his stomach. Cortés purchased the ship with all its provisions, except for the horses, as they already had owners. By repairing a caravel discarded by the Spaniards and fashioning a brigantine from the timber salvaged from wrecked ships, he was soon equipped to sail, if he so wished. It is amazing to see how quickly Cortés took action when needed, and how alert he always was.

After Cortés's arrival, the men left Nito to explore the land, since earlier they (f. 144v) [LdeG: neither dared nor] could not. As they went about various places, they encountered a path that took them through some [LdeG: very] rough mountains to Lequela, a good and well-stocked town. However, since it was eighteen leagues distant, almost all of it very bad road, they were unable to provision themselves there. When Cortés observed the town's poor layout and settlement plan and that someone else governed it, he prepared to sail his three ships to Bahía de San Andrés. He sent Gonzalo de Sandoval with nearly all his men and horses, save for two, to Naco, twenty leagues distant, to pacify the Spaniards who were still stirred up from the earlier uprisings. He did not wish to embark without plenty of provisions in case their journey was delayed. Boarding forty Spaniards and fifty Indians in the brigantine, two boats, and four canoes, he entered by means of the river and reached a gulf or estuary, its periphery measuring up to twelve leagues, unpopulated because of its flooded shores. From there, he went to another gulf whose circumference was more than thirty

455. LdeG uses *cabezas rotas*; literally, "broken heads."

leagues and whose location in those incredibly rugged mountains is a sight to see. After disembarking with thirty Spaniards and another thirty Indians, he reached a town that had no people or grain and returned to the ships with the maize and chiles he had been able to collect.

While traversing the gulf, Cortés lost a canoe in a storm, and an Indian drowned. The next day, he entered a small river, left the ships and the brigantine guarded by some Spaniards, and went inland with all his other men. At half a league, he encountered a town, desolate and defeated like so many in the area due to the good Spaniards' neighborly presence.[456] That day, crawling most of the time through forests, he advanced five leagues to some fields where he found three women and a man, most likely farmers, in a hut. The man took him to another, where he captured two more women. He reached a hamlet with forty huts that, although newly built, were already in miserable condition. There they found uncaged [turkey] hens, many doves, quail and pheasants in cages, and dried maize, but they did not find salt, which was what they were looking for, or men, either. However, they captured two men who appeared shortly, unaware that the Spaniards were in their houses. The men took Cortés through a dense, overgrown road even worse than the previous one, seven leagues of which crossed forty-five rivers and innumerable streams that emptied into the estuary.

At sunset, our men heard a great noise, frightening them. Marina called out, "What is it?" and they were told it was a celebration with dances. Not daring to enter the town, Cortés remained watchful and under guard, for neither the mosquito bites nor the heavy rains, thunder, or lightning let him sleep that night. The men assailed the town at dawn, capturing the residents while they slept. Had it not been for the cry of "Santiago! Santiago!" by a Spaniard, frightened or surprised to see so many men together in one house, they would have conducted a stunning raid, with little or no bloodshed. Still, they managed to capture fifteen men and twenty women and to kill about the same number, among them, the town's lord. The townspeople lay asleep under a wide roof without walls, where they gather to dance as if in a council building. Since Cortés's men did not find even one grain of maize [LdeG: there], they left two (f. 145) days later for another town that the prisoners said was larger and stocked with all sorts of provisions. Advancing eight leagues, they captured some woodcutters and eight hunters. They crossed a river that rose up to their chests, protecting themselves from danger by holding each other's hands. They slept in the field, but since the town sounded a loud alarm, they entered fighting, circling the plaza and frightening the residents, who fled.

456. This is an ironic statement, of course.

Upon inspecting the houses the next morning, the Spaniards found much cotton, spun and loose, mantas and other clothing, much dried maize and in grain, and much salt, which was what they sought, since they had not eaten it for many days. They also found quantities of cacao, aji **or chile,** beans, fruit, and foodstuffs to eat, turkeys, many pheasants and quail in cages, and dogs fattening in pens. Had the boats and even the ships been nearby, they could have been loaded, but they were at a distance of twenty leagues and the men so tired they could barely carry the provisions. The town has temples in the manner of Mexico [Tenochtitlan], although its language is very different. A river runs through it that empties into the gulf, so Cortés sent two Spaniards with one of the eight hunters as their guide to bring the brigantine and ships downriver to load the foodstuffs.

In the meantime, Cortés with ten of his men built four large rafts that carried fifty cargas of grain each. The two Spaniards returned, leaving the boats at considerable distance down the river because of its strong current. After loading the rafts, Cortés sent the men by land, while he went by river. Until they reached the brigantine, they were in great danger from the cries and arrows aimed at them from shore, and although Cortés and many were wounded, no one was killed. One of the Spaniards who went by land died suddenly from some wild plants he ate along the way. An Indian from the South Sea came with them, saying that it was no more than sixty leagues from Nito to his land, where Pedro de Alvarado resided, good news that made them very happy. The riverbanks were covered with cacao and many other fruit trees, with many notable orchards and *heredamientos*, "hereditary estates," all in all, one of the best attractions in those parts. The rafts floated twenty leagues in a day and night, so fast is the river's current. Cortés not only took the maize and foodstuffs I mentioned above, but he took much more from other towns, with which he provisioned his ships fairly well. It took him thirty-five days to return to Nito.

[Chapter 185]. How Cortés Arrived at Naco

As soon as he arrived at Nito, Cortés boarded all the Spaniards on the ship, both his and Gil González's men, to sail to Bahía de San Andrés, where the men he had sent to Naco awaited him. He remained there twenty days, and as it was a good port and gave signs of having some gold in the region and the rivers, he founded a town with fifty Spaniards, including twenty horsemen. Naming it Natividad de Nuestra Señora, he built a cabildo and a church and left a cleric with what he needed to say mass, as

well as some small cannons. Afterward, he went to Puerto de Honduras, otherwise called Trujillo, with his ships. As the roads were good, although they crossed some rivers, he sent twenty horsemen and ten crossbowmen by land. (f. 145v) He remained at sea nine days due to bad weather before finally arriving at his destination. The Spaniards were so happy to see him they dashed into the water, carrying him bodily from the boat.

Cortés went to church to give thanks to God for having brought him to his desired destination. As I have related earlier, he was given there a full account of all that had transpired among Gil González de Ávila, Francisco Hernández, Cristóbal de Olid, Francisco de las Casas, and Bachiller Moreno. The Spaniards asked his forgiveness for having followed Cristóbal de Olid for a short while, as they could do nothing else, and they beseeched Cortés to assist them, since they were so destitute. He forgave them, reinstating the men to their offices and naming others for the first time. He began to build houses, and within two days of his arrival he sent a Spaniard who understood the language along with two Mexica to two towns seven leagues' distant called Chapaxina and Papaica, which are cabeceras, to tell them Captain Cortés had arrived from Mexico Tenochtitlan.

The towns listened attentively to the message, sending back some men with the Spaniard to learn if what they said was true. Cortés received them very well, gifting them with small trade items. He spoke with them through Marina, inviting their lords to visit him, for he desired it very much, saying he would not go to them so they would not flee. The messengers were happy to speak with Marina, since the Mexica language was not that different from theirs, except in the way the words were pronounced. They promised Cortés they would do as he asked and departed. Five days later, two principales came with fowl, fruit, maize, and other things to eat. They told Captain Cortés to take the foodstuffs, which were sent on behalf of their lords, and to tell them what he wanted from them and what he sought in their land. The lords had not come to see him for fear the Spaniards would carry them off in their ships, as had happened recently to others (it was later learned that Bachiller Moreno and Juan Ruano had done this). Cortés answered that his arrival was not for ill but for good and for the benefit of the land and its people. Therefore, they should believe and listen to him, for he would punish those who had been capturing [native] men and work to retrieve the residents. The lords should not be afraid to come before him, as he would tell them of all he sought. The messengers would not know how to tell them, even if they heard it from Cortés. They were to tell them that he came only to safeguard the lords' treasures and persons and to achieve the salvation of their souls.

With this, he bade them farewell, asking them to bring him woodcutters to fell trees. In a short while, many men arrived from over fifteen towns and lordships, bringing their own provisions and to work wherever they were told. During this time, Cortés dispatched four ships, three that he brought and another large caravel that we have mentioned above. On one, he sent the sick to New Spain. He wrote to Mexico and all the councils about his voyage, (f. 146) saying it was in the interest of the emperor's service that he remain a few days in those parts and entrusted the governance and peace of the land to their charge. He sent his cousin Juan de Ávalos, who was captain of the ship, to collect in Cozumel sixty Spaniards that a certain Valenzuela had left abandoned when he raided El Triunfo de la Cruz, which had been founded by Cristóbal de Olid.

After boarding the Spaniards in Cozumel, the ship foundered in Cuba on the cape called San Antón. Juan de Ávalos, two Franciscan friars, and more than thirty others drowned. Of those who escaped the storm and went inland, no more than fifteen remained alive by eating wild plants, and they made it to Guaniguanico. Eighty Spaniards died on the voyage, without counting the Indians. Cortés sent the brigantine to Hispaniola with letters for the oidores about his arrival and what had happened to Cristóbal de Olid. He asked that Bachiller Moreno be ordered to return the Indians he had taken as slaves to the towns of Papaica and Chapaxina. He sent the other ships to Jamaica and Trinidad de Cuba for meat, bread, and clothing, but they also encountered bad weather, although they were not lost.

[Chapter 186]. How Cortés Responded to the Conflict in Mexico

Hearing daily that Cortés had died, the oidores in Santo Domingo sent a merchant ship that was coming to New Spain with thirty-two horses and their trappings along with other items for sale to ascertain if it was true. When the captain of the ship learned from the men on the brigantine at Trinidad de Cuba that Cortés was alive and in Honduras, he changed course from Medellín to Trujillo, thinking to sell the merchandise at a higher price. Licenciado Zuazo sent a letter to Cortés with the ship, informing him of the great evils, factions, and war going on in Mexico among the Spaniards and officials of the king that he, Cortés, had left as his lieutenants. He wrote that Gonzalo de Salazar and Peralmíndez Chirinos had proclaimed themselves governors, spreading the rumor that he was dead, and that some had even held funeral services for him. They had captured the treasurer Alonso de Estrada and the accountant

Rodrigo de Albornoz, hanged Rodrigo de Paz, and named other alcaldes and alguaciles. They were sending him, Zuazo, as prisoner to Cuba, to take a residencia of the time he had served as judge there. He added that the Indians were ready to revolt. In sum, he related everything that was occurring in the city.

When Cortés read the letters, he was overcome with pain and sadness, saying, "Put a despicable man in power, and you will soon know who he is. I deserve it because I honored strangers and not my own people, who had followed me all their lives." He retired to his room to think and even weep over the tragic situation, undecided as to whether it was better to go himself or to send someone, so that that good land would not be lost. For three days, he ordered processions and masses to the Holy Ghost to guide him on which was in the best service of God. In the end, he postponed his own work to go and remedy the evils in Mexico, so angered was he at the men who had instigated the uprising. He left his cousin Hernando de Saavedra[457] in Trujillo with fifty Spanish footsoldiers and thirty-five horsemen. He wrote to Gonzalo de Sandoval, ordering him to leave Naco for Mexico by land with his company and to take Francisco de las Casas's route. The road, which was level and safe, led to the South Sea and beyond to Guatemala. Boarding the ship that had brought him such bad news, he left for Medellín.

(f. 146v) With one anchor yet to raise, Cortés was ready to sail, but there was no wind, and he returned to town to put down a conflict among the residents, subduing them by punishing the rebels. Two days later, he returned to ship, lifted anchor, and unfurled the sails, taking off in good weather. However, the main yard broke not two leagues from the port, forcing him to return. He spent three days repairing the yard and again left port with good wind. He had advanced fifty leagues in two nights and a day when an adverse north wind began to blow so heavily that it broke the foremast off at the cap. He decided that, although it was dangerous, he should return to port, where he again ordered processions and had masses said. Cortés came to believe that God did not wish him to abandon the land or go to Mexico, as he had departed so many times in good weather only to be forced to return. He decided to stay and instead sent Martín de Dorantes [LdeG: his squire] on the same ship bound for Pánuco, with letters for whomever he thought best and many powers of attorney for Francisco de las Casas, revoking all powers of attorney previously issued. He also sent noblemen and principales from Mexico to confirm that he was not dead as had been proclaimed. As I

457. Thomas, *Who's Who*, 380, adds that Saavedra was appointed lieutenant governor, although it is not clear just how he was related to Cortés.

have said elsewhere, Martín Dorantes arrived in Mexico after suffering great danger and after Francisco de la Casas had already been sent to Spain as prisoner. But his arrival was sufficient to convince the residents of the city that Cortés was alive.

[Chapter 187]. The War at Papaica

Once the ship was dispatched and on course, Cortés sent Hernando de Saavedra to explore the land with thirty of his companions on foot and another thirty on horseback. He advanced thirty-five leagues through a valley of very good land with numerous towns having much food to eat and good pasture. Peacefully and without attacking, he brought over many towns to the Christians' side, and twenty lords came before Cortés to offer themselves as friends, each day bringing provisions as gifts and for trade. The lords of Papaica and Chapaxina had rebelled against Cortés, although they sent representatives from some of their towns. Cortés ordered them repeatedly to submit, guaranteeing their lives and property. But as they would not listen, he tricked and captured three lords of Chapaxina, placing them in irons and giving them only a limited time to resettle their towns, warning that if they did not comply, they would be punished. [The lords] then commanded all the people to return with their possessions, so Cortés released them. Their names were Chicueytl, Potlo, and Mendereto.

Since neither the men of Papaica nor their lords wished to come or obey his orders, Cortés sent a company of Spanish foot soldiers and horsemen with many Indians. One night they assaulted and captured Pizacura, one of the two lords of the city. When asked why he had not been good or obeyed him, he responded that he would have come to offer himself, but that Mazatl, the other lord, was more influential in the community, and he did not consent to peace or friendship with the Christians. If they let him go, he would spy on Mazatl so he would be captured and hanged and the land pacified and resettled. However, this did not happen, despite Pizacura's release and Mazatl's capture. When told what Pizacura had said, Mazatl ordered his vassals to come down from the sierra and resettle Papaica. But since he could not be contained, (f. 147) he was brought to Trujillo, prosecuted, and condemned to death. His execution caused great fear among the other lords and towns, making them leave the forests and return to their houses with their children, wives, and belongings, with the exception of Papaica, which refused to submit after Pizacura's release.

Because their actions obstructed peace, and they did not wish to

return to their town, Pizacura and his people were prosecuted. Thus, after first having been approached peacefully and lawfully, war was waged against them. Close to one hundred people were sold as slaves and Pizacura, captured; yet, although he was condemned to death, he was not killed but kept prisoner with two other [LdeG: minor] lords and a youth. It seems that the youth was the true lord, not Mazatl or Pizacura, who only acted as his guardians in order to usurp his power. At the time, twenty Spaniards, who were Gonzalo de Sandoval's and Francisco Hernández's men, arrived in Trujillo from Naco. They related how a captain with forty companions had come on behalf of Hernández, Pedrarias's lieutenant. He had arrived at Bahía de San Andrés, where Villa de la Natividad de Nuestra Señora was founded, in search of Bachiller Moreno. The latter had written Francisco Hernández in order to retain the men, land, and government by order of the chancellory, and not by Pedrarias. Because of this, there were uprisings among the Spaniards, who thought that Hernández was rebelling against Governor Pedrarias. And this could well be, as it is customary in New Spain for lieutenants to act on their own.

Cortés wrote to Francisco Hernández, asking him to hold the land and people in encomienda given him by Pedrarias, and therefore, the king, and not by anyone else. This was one of the reasons why Pedrarias later beheaded Hernández. He also sent Hernández four mules loaded with ironware and equipment to work in the mines. After the twenty Spaniards left, some men from the province of Huictlato, which is sixty-five leagues from Trujillo, came to complain to Cortés that the Spaniards were taking their women, belongings, and workmen, and generally mistreating them. They begged him to help them, since he helped all others who suffered likewise. As he had already heard from Hernando de Saavedra, who was pacifying the province of Papaica, Cortés sent an alguacil and two Indians among those who complained to Gabriel Rojas (Francisco Hernández's captain) with orders and letters that he should leave the land of Huictlato in peace and return the people he had taken.

Either because Cortés was nearby or because Francisco Hernández had called for him, [Rosas] returned to where he came from, as it seems that Captains Sosa and Andrés Garavito had mutinied against Francisco Hernández for wanting to break with Pedrarias.

Bearing in mind the dissensions and conflicts among the Spaniards and the fact that the province of Nicaragua was very rich and close by, wishing to go there, Hernando Cortés began to prepare himself for the route he would take through a rugged sierra.

[Chapter 188]. On Cortés's Return to New Spain

While Cortés was in the midst of his preparations, his cousin fray Diego Altamirano, a Franciscan and man of affairs and much honor, told Cortés that he had come to take (f. 147v) him to Mexico within the hour to calm the passions that were consuming the Spaniards. He told of the death of Rodrigo de Paz, the imprisonment of Francisco de las Casas, the whipping of Juana de Mansilla, the sacking of his house, the necromancy of Factor Salazar, and the departure of Juan de la Peña to Spain with monies for the emperor and letters for Cobos. In sum, he related all that had transpired. He further told him that Salazar had himself addressed as "Your Lordship," had a dais with a canopy built for him, and had himself saluted with the firing of cannons. [Salazar] had never taken these measures before, claiming that, because he had not behaved as a governor, he was not treated as one. Cortés felt great pain and sadness upon hearing this news, as he knew it was true. But he enjoyed speaking with fray Diego, who was a sensible and courageous man, and for whom he cared greatly, besides.

Since Cortés had many Indian workers preparing the road to Nicaragua, he sent some with several Spaniards to do the same in Guatemala, proposing to follow Francisco de las Casas's route. He sent messengers to all the cities along the way, letting them know of his plans and asking them to have provisions ready and the roads cleared. All the cities were very pleased that Malinxe (as he was called)[458] would pass through their land, as they held him in great esteem for having won Mexico Tenochtitlan. They thus prepared the roads as far as the Valle de Ulancho and the Chindon sierras, which are very craggy. All the caciques were provisioned and ready to host and entertain Cortés in their lands and towns. But he abandoned that long voyage because fray Diego advocated against it and because he was still leery about the route he had taken from Villa del Espíritu Santo to Trujillo, where he now was. Instead, he agreed to go by sea to New Spain and began to outfit two ships and provide the new towns of Trujillo and La Natividad with their necessities.

In the meantime, some men from Huitla and other islands named Guanaxos, which are located between Puerto de Caballos and Puerto de Honduras, although at some distance from the coast, came to thank Cortés for a good deed he had done them and to ask for a Spaniard for each island, saying that they would thus be protected. Instead, he gave each Indian letters of protection, as he could not be detained or spare the men they requested. He charged Hernando de Saavedra, whom

458. Here, Cortés is referred to as Malinche.

he left as his lieutenant in Trujillo, to send them the Spaniards when the war in Papaica ended. The reason was that in Cuba and Jamaica some men on a ship armed themselves and went to capture the islanders to work in the mines, sugarcane and other fields, and as shepherds. Upon learning of this, Cortés sent a caravel with many men aboard in case they were needed to ask the captain of the ship, named Rodrigo de Merlo, not to capture these poor men, but if they had, to release them. Thanks to Cortés's promises, Merlo moved to Trujillo to live, and the Indians were restored to their islands.

To return to Cortés, I say, then, that since he had prepared the ships, he boarded twenty Spaniards, as many horses, and many Mexica and Pizacura with the other lords from the region so they would see Mexico and its fealty to the Spaniards (f. 148) and on their return be similarly loyal. However, Pizacura died before he could return. Cortés departed Puerto de Trujillo on April 25, 1526. There was good weather until he rounded the cape of Yucatan and passed the Alacranes [reefs]. Hit by a strong gale, he lowered the sails so he would not be pushed back, but the gale strengthened by the hour, as it usually does, so much so that it was about to destroy the ships. He was forced to put in at Havana, Cuba, where he stayed ten days, visiting with the people from the town, who he had known for many years, and inspecting the ships from time to time. While there, he learned from a ship that had come from New Spain that Mexico had grown peaceful after the imprisonment of Factor Salazar and Peralmíndez Chirinos, which was cause for no little happiness.

After leaving Havana, he advanced to Chalchicueyecan in eight days under a favorable wind. He could not enter port, however, either because of a change in the weather or because there was a strong offshore wind. He anchored two leagues from shore, reaching land by small boat and traveling on foot five leagues to Medellín. There, Cortés went to church to give thanks to God that he had returned alive to New Spain. The men of the villa, who were asleep at the time, learned of his arrival and rose with great happiness and haste to see him, not believing it was he, and some did not recognize him, for he was ill with fever and badly battered by the sea. In truth, he had worked extremely hard and suffered many hardships, physical as well as spiritual. He had traveled without a fixed route more than five hundred leagues, although there are no more than four hundred from Trujillo to Mexico by way of Guatemala and Tehuantepec, which is the road most traveled and direct.

For many months, he ate wild plants cooked without salt and drank fetid water, which is the reason many Spaniards and even Indians died, among them [LdeG: was Coanacochtzin], **and don Juan Velázquez**

Tlacotzin Cihuacoatl, lord of Mexico Tenochtitlan, who died while on the road at the place called Achiyotlan as he returned to Mexico in the year of 1526. He governed no more than one year and one month. Among the Mexica princes and soldiers that in the said wars fought with the said Captain Cortés, Coanacochtizn, lord of Tetzcoco died before returning to his dominions, and don Carlos Oquitzin, lord of Azcapotzalco, never returned. Afterward, here in Mexico, when Cortés and the Mexica arrived the same year in the place of the said don Juan Velázquez Tlacotzin Cihuacoatl, by consensus they agreed to elect a Mexica *particular*, "individual," "private person," **named don Andrés Motelchiuhtzin as *mayoral*,** "overseer," **and captain general of Mexico Tenochtitlan, as is the ancient custom among the Mexica before they had kings, as seen in the Mexica count.**[459] **Therefore, from the time the Mexica left their land, the great city of Aztlan Chicomoztoc that the Spaniards now call New Mexico, to the time they founded and settled Mexico Tenochtitlan, they wandered from place to place for two hundred and sixty years until their arrival. On the road, there was a king they called Huitzilihuitl the elder, first of this name, and eight captains general or mayorales. The said don Andrés Motelchiuhtzin was a valiant soldier and was *mayordomo*,** "steward," **in the house of King Moteuczoma.** Perhaps many readers will not take delight in this voyage of Cortés's, for it contains no newsworthy or entertaining items, (f. 148v) but labors that frighten.

[Chapter 189]. On the Celebrations in Mexico in Cortés's Honor

When Cortés reached Medellín, he dispatched messengers to all the towns and, in particular, to Mexico, informing them of his arrival, and as soon as they learned of it, all rejoiced at the news. The Indians of the coastal region came to greet him bearing turkeys, fruit, and cacao for him to eat, and they brought featherwork, mantas, silver, and gold. They offered him their help if he wished to kill those who had angered him. Thanking them for their gifts and love, Cortés said he would not kill anyone, because the emperor would punish them. He stayed in Medellín eleven or twelve days, and it took him fifteen to reach Mexico. In Cempoala, they received him very well. Everywhere he went, although he traveled through mostly unpopulated areas, he found sufficient food and drink. Numerous Indians greeted him on the road, traveling a distance of up to eighty leagues, with gifts, offerings, and even complaints,

459. A reference to pictorial annals, with which C. was very familiar.

showing great contentment at his arrival. They cleared the road, strewing it with flowers, so loved was he, and many wept thinking of the wrongs that had been done to them in his absence, like the people of Oaxaca, who demanded vengeance.

Rodrigo de Albornoz, who was in Tetzcoco, took a day's journey to greet Cortés with many Spaniards, and in that city [Cortés] was joyfully received. He entered Mexico with great joy and happiness, because all the Spaniards, including Alonso de Estrada, came in battle formation to receive him outside the city. And all the Indians came to see him, as if he were the great Moteuczoma. The streets were filled with people; there were great celebrations and much dancing. They played drums, conch horns, trumpets, and many flutes. They did not stop going about the town that day or night, building bonfires and lighting torches. Cortés could not hide his delight on seeing the Indians, the triumphal entry that they made for him, and the calm and peace of the city. He went directly to the church of San Francisco to rest and give thanks to God, who had saved him from so many labors and dangers, giving him tranquility and security.

[Chapter 190]. How the Emperor Ordered a Residencia Be Taken for Cortés

Cortés was the most renowned man in our nation, but many slandered him, especially Pánfilo de Narváez, who brought charges against him at court. As the Council of the Indies had not received any of Cortés's letters for some time, they suspected and even believed the worst of him. Thus, they named *Almirante*, "Admiral," don Diego Colón as governor of Mexico, who was at the time in litigation with the king, claiming the governance of Mexico and many other places, so that he would bring or send one thousand men at his expense to capture Cortés. [The Council] also appointed Nuño de Guzmán as governor of Pánuco and the Portuguese Simón de Alcazaba as governor of Honduras. This was accomplished with the help of Juan de Rivera, Cortés's secretary and procurador. [Rivera] had fought with Martín Cortés over the 4,000 ducats that he brought but refused to turn over and said horrible things about his master that many believed. However, (f. 149) [LdeG: one night] while busy with these affairs, Rivera ate a piece of bacon at a ceremony he attended and died.

The appointments could not be made secretly nor were the appointed able to keep the secret, as it was not to their benefit to have it known at court, then at Toledo. Many in favor of Cortés disagreed with the

appointments, and Comendador Pedro de Pina told Licenciado Núñez about them, while fray Pedro Melgarejo revealed them to the people of La Trinidad while staying with Gonzalo de Hurtado. Registering complaints about the appointments, they asked for a reprieve of a few days to see what news came from Mexico. The duke of Béjar, don Álvaro de Zúñiga, supported Hernando Cortés's faction since he wished to marry him to his niece, doña Juana de Zúñiga.[460] He sponsored [Cortés], lent him funds, and appeased the emperor. At this time, Diego de Soto arrived at Seville with 70,000 castellanos and the silver culverin that, as a novel and expensive item, brought Spain and other kingdoms much fame. This gold was, in truth, what kept Cortés from losing the governance, yet it prompted the dispatch of a residencia judge to investigate him. When, as I said, such a grand present arrived, and it was agreed that a residencia judge would be sent, they searched for a man of letters and lineage who could **carry it out** [LdeG: do the errand] and would command everyone's respect, since soldiers are known for their daring.

Since the court was in Toledo, they heard positively of Licenciado Luis Ponce de León, lieutenant and relative of don Martín de Córdoba, count of Alcaudete and *corregidor*, "a royal official who served as governor of a district," of the city. Although young, [Ponce de León] had already established a very good reputation, so they confidently sent him to New Spain with the necessary powers of attorney. To avert mistakes and proceed correctly, he took with him Bachiller Marcos de Aguilar, who had spent some years on the island of Santo Domingo, as alcalde mayor for Admiral don Diego Colón. Sailing under good conditions, he reached Villa Rica de la Veracruz shortly after Cortés left Medellín. Simón de Cuenca, lieutenant of the villa, informed Cortés that some investigators and royal judges had arrived to take his residencia. Cuenca's letters traveled so quickly that they were in Mexico in two days by human relay. Cortés was at the church of San Francisco, having confessed and received Holy Communion when the letters arrived. Already he had appointed new alcaldes and captured Gonzalo de Ocampo and other scoundrels and supporters of Factor Salazar, carrying out his own secret investigation.

Two or three days later, on the feast day of San Juan, while Cortés was at a bullfight in Mexico, another messenger arrived with letters from Licenciado Luis Ponce [de León] and one from the emperor, in which he learned the reason for Ponce's visit. He answered Ponce, asking him which road he was taking to Mexico, whether through populated territory, or the other, which was faster. Ponce did not respond, wishing

460. By this time, Cortés's first wife had died, and he was free to marry again.

to rest some days since he was exhausted from the trip, as he had just crossed the ocean for the first time. However, some warned him that if he did not come soon, Cortés would pass judgment on Factor Salazar, Peralmíndez Chirinos, and the others he had imprisoned. Once [Cortés] knew which of the two roads Ponce would take, rather than receive him he would capture him on the road. Ponce departed with some (f. 149v) nobles and friars who had traveled with him along the more populated road, although it was longer, so he would not be attacked or insulted **(**such is the power of gossip**).** Ponce made such good progress that in five days he arrived at Iztacpalapan, not giving Cortés's servants, who had taken both roads, time to prepare for him a good repast, table, and night at an inn.

Iztacpalapan celebrated Ponce's arrival with a banquet and great festivities. Yet, after dining, the licenciado and almost all in his party could not keep down what they had eaten and also suffered diarrhea. They thought it was due to poison, and Dominican fray Tomás Ortiz affirmed that the custard was poisoned and that Ponce had given him a dish of it. Andrés de Tapia, serving as host, said, "They will bring other dishes for Your Reverence," at which the friar replied, "Not this one, nor any other." This malicious anecdote was also repeated in the verses of the Provincial, which I mentioned previously, and was brought up during the residencia. However, it was a bald lie **(**as we say later**),** for Comendador Proaño, who had been appointed alguacil mayor, ate everything that the licenciado had eaten, from the same dish of custard or curds, and he did not vomit or become ill. Rather, I believe that because they were hot, [LdeG: tired], and hungry, they ate in excess and drank very cold beverages, which upset their stomachs, causing vomiting and diarrhea.

Ponce was offered lavish gifts by Cortés, but he refused to accept anything. Cortés came to receive him with Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Alonso de Estrada, Rodrigo de Albornoz, and the entire regiment and cavalry of Mexico. Ponce walked on Cortés's right to the church of San Francisco, where they heard mass that morning. Cortés told him to present the decrees he brought with him, but since he responded it would not be for another day, he took him to his house, lodging him properly. The next day, the cabildo and all the residents met in the cathedral, where Luis Ponce presented the decrees, all of this recorded by an escribano. He took the staffs of office from the alcaldes and alguaciles, giving them back to everyone, saying courteously, "I would like the staff of governor for myself." Cortés and all the cabildo kissed the emperor's letters, putting them over their heads and saying they would obey what was written as commandment from

their king and lord, and this was duly witnessed. Afterward, Cortés's residencia was publicly proclaimed so that those aggrieved against him could present their complaints. You should see each and everyone bustle about and negotiate: some in fright, some with hope, and some with malice.

[Chapter 191]. The Death of Luis Ponce [de León]

One day Licenciado Ponce went to hear mass at San Francisco and returned to his lodging with a high fever that was likely caused by *modorra*.[461] Taking to his bed, he remained irrational for three days, with increasing fever and lethargy. He wrote his last will, designated Bachiller Marcos de Aguilar to replace him, and received the last rites. (f. 150) Cortés lamented his death with as many tears as would a father, burying him in the church of San Francisco with much pomp, mourning, and candle wax. Cortés's enemies accused him of having poisoned Ponce, but Licenciado Pero López and Doctor Ojeda, who treated him, recognized the symptoms of modorra and swore he had died of the disease. They testified that the afternoon before his death he asked that they play a drumroll for him, and as he lay in the bed he followed the beat and rhythm with his feet, which many people observed. He then could no longer speak and died that night before dawn. Few people die dancing, as did this man of letters.

Of the one hundred persons who embarked with Licenciado Luis Ponce de León, the majority died at sea, on the road, or very soon after reaching land; and two out of twelve Dominican friars died. It was suspected that the disease was pestilence, since it spread to those who had been in contact with the dead. The men who went with Ponce included many hidalgos and nobles, among them, [Comendador] Proaño, a royal officer **(**whom I have mentioned before**)**, and Captain Salazar de la Pedrada, as alcaide of Mexico. Fray Tomás Ortiz, who had been at Boca del Dragón [Venezuela], for seven years, came as provincial with twelve Dominican friars. As a religious, he acted scandalously, for he spread two malicious rumors about Cortés: the first was that Cortés poisoned Licenciado Luis Ponce, and the other that Luis Ponce carried express orders from the emperor to behead Cortés after taking away his staff of office. He told Cortés of the second [rumor] even before he arrived in Mexico, sending word with Juan Suárez, Francisco de Orduña, and Alonso Valiente. When Cortés arrived, he repeated it in the church

461. Described as a profound stupor.

of San Francisco, in the presence of **the saintly** fray Martín de Valencia, fray Toribio **Motolinia**, and many other religious. Cortés, however, was very sensible in not believing any of it. With the first rumor, the friar wished to win favor, and with the second, money. But Ponce died, and Cortés gave [Ortiz] nothing.

[Chapter 192]. How Alonso de Estrada Exiled Cortés from Mexico

After Luis Ponce de León's death, Bachiller Marcos de Aguilar took over the proceedings of Cortés's residencia. Some were very pleased by this, while others were not. The former intended to destroy Cortés, and the latter to safeguard him. They said that since Aguilar's powers of attorney were not valid, neither were his orders, as Luis Ponce could not have issued them. Therefore, the cabildo of Mexico and the procuradores from the other villas who were present appealed and protested Aguilar's governance. They officially petitioned Cortés before an escribano to once again take possession of the government and administration of justice until His Majesty decreed otherwise. However, Cortés did not wish to do so, trusting his own innocence, so that the emperor would learn truly of his service and loyalty. Rather, he defended and supported Marcos de Aguilar in his office, demanding that he proceed with the residencia against him. But the bachiller, although he carried out justice, did not follow through on his duties as governor.

The cabildo, not knowing what else to do, named Gonzalo de Sandoval to assist Aguilar in investigating Cortés, as they were great good friends. (f. 150v) Sandoval refused, however, with Cortés's consent. So Aguilar governed with grief and in hardship, and I do not know if it was due to his illnesses or the malicious intent of others, or because he was overwhelmed with his many obligations. He lost weight, contracted a fever, and since he suffered from bubas **(**an old disease with him**)**, he died some two months after Luis Ponce de León and two months before one of his sons, who had arrived ill from his journey. Before his death, he named his successor as governor and justicia mayor, Treasurer Alonso de Estrada, since Albornoz had gone to Spain and the other two royal officials were in jail. The cabildo and almost everyone else condemned the substitution, for it appeared to them that it was nepotism. They named Gonzalo de Sandoval as Estrada's assistant, and Cortés in charge of the Indians and war. These deliberations lasted a few months.

However, the emperor, following the advice of the Council of the Indies and after reading the report from Rodrigo de Albornoz **(**who left

Mexico after Luis Ponce's death and Marco de Aguilar's illness), ordered that Bachiller Aguilar should name the governor until he willed otherwise. So Alonso de Estrada governed alone, and Cortés did not receive the respect that he deserved for having won the city and conquered so many lands. Neither did he receive it for having made Estrada governor earlier. Indeed, Estrada thought that because he was regidor of Mexico, royal treasurer, and governor, although provisionally, he was Cortés's equal and superseded him in governance by rightfully assuming the administration of justice. Estrada spoke rudely to Cortés and acted inappropriately, so there were many conflicts between them, and they grew increasingly angry with each other. Alonso de Estrada realized that, were he to challenge Hernando Cortés, he would be the loser. Rather, he befriended Gonzalo de Salazar and Peralmíndez, giving them hope that they would be released. In doing so, he revealed his own bias, which does not suit a good judge and insults the person of the Catholic king, who was so revered.

It happened that some of Cortés's servants stabbed a captain in an argument, one of whom was taken prisoner. That same day, Estrada had the servant's hand cut off and returned him to jail until he paid his legal fees or to ridicule Cortés, his master. He also sent Cortés into exile so he could not claim the prisoner, a scandalous occurrence, which could have caused much bloodshed or the loss of the city that day. However, Cortés solved everything by leaving Mexico to fulfill his sentence. If he really had the soul of a tyrant, as they claimed, what better occasion or time to act as one? Since almost all the Spaniards and all the Indians took up arms to defend him, I do not say at that time only, but on many other occasions he could have led the land in revolt. However, by the feats he accomplished, I believe he never wished or thought of it. Certainly, he may very well pride himself for being most loyal to the king, for if not, he would have been punished. He had many great rivals who accused him (f. 151) of disloyalty and called him worse and even more disparaging names, such as tyrant or traitor in order to turn the emperor against him. As I have said elsewhere, they expected to be believed because they enjoyed favor at court and on councils and because each day more Spaniards in the Indies lost respect for the king. However, Hernando Cortés always repeated these two old proverbs: "The king will always be my fighting cock [I will always bet on my king]"[462] and "You must die for your king and your law."[463]

The same day that the Spaniard's hand was cut off, the Dominican

462. *El rey sea mi gallo.*
463. *Por tu rey y por tu ley morirás.*

fray Julián Garcés arrived at Tetzcoco as bishop of Tlaxcala, a diocese called Carolense in honor of the Emperor Charles, our king and lord. He learned of the unrest among the Spaniards and boarded a canoe with his fellow fray Diego de Loaysa. Within four hours he arrived in Mexico, the first bishop to make an entrance there, where all the clerics and friars received him with many crosses. He then mediated with prudence and authority, reconciling Cortés and Estrada and eliminating the factions. Shortly thereafter, decrees arrived from the emperor ordering the release of Factor Salazar and Inspector Peralmíndez, the reinstatement of their offices, and the return of their property. This caused Cortés no little anguish, for he wished some retribution for the death of his cousin Rodrigo de Paz and restitution for the goods taken from his house. However, he did not consider the old sayings, "If you help your enemy, you become his victim," and "A dead dog cannot bite." He could have beheaded them before the arrival of Licenciado Luis Ponce de León, as some had advised. Although he had it in his power, he rejected the idea for several reasons: because it should not be said that he was the judge for his own case; because he was a courageous man; and because it was very clear that they had killed Rodrigo de Paz without cause. Moreover, Cortés was confident that any judge or governor the emperor might send would sentence them to death for the civil war they had instigated and the injustices they had committed. Cortés also knew that they were well connected at court,[464] as they say, for they were creatures of Cobos, the royal secretary, whom he did not wish to anger, so he would not harm his other far more important negotiations.

[Chapter 193]. How Cortés Sent Ships in Search of the Spice Islands

On June 20, 1526, the emperor wrote Cortés from Granada, ordering him to dispatch the ships he had in Zacatula to search for the ship the *Trinidad* and fray García de Loaysa, Comendador of the Order of San Juan, who had sailed to the Moluccas and for Sebastián Cabot. He also ordered Cortés to find a route to the Spice Islands from New Spain through the South Sea, since Cortés had promised to do so in his letters, either going himself or sending someone else if it was in His Majesty's service. He would raise a fleet capable of challenging any other prince's control over those islands, even the king of Portugal. He would conquer them not only to trade their valuable goods and spices, but to seize and take them as his own property. He would build fortresses and

464. *Porque tenian como dizen el alcalde por suegro,* "Because they had, as they say, the magistrate for a father-in-law."

Christian towns to rule over all the islands and lands that fall under the king's share of the world according to the demarcation, including Gilolo, Bornei,[465] both Java Islands, Zamotra,[466] Malacca, and the entire coast (f. 151v) of China. In return, the king should grant him certain privileges and favors. Cortés having offered and the emperor accepting, and with no war or business with which to occupy himself, Cortés decided to send three ships to the Moluccas and open a route in that direction to keep his word. Moreover, right when Marcos de Aguilar was ill, Hortunio de Alango of Portugalete arrived in Cihuatlan[467] in a tender from Loaysa's fleet, carried there either by contrary winds or because he did not know the way to Tidore.[468]

Cortés launched three ships into the sea. Fifty Spaniards boarded the flagship, the *Florida*, forty-five were in the second ship, the *Santiago*, under Captain Luis de Cárdenas from Córdoba. Fifteen Spaniards were in a brigantine under Captain Pedro de Fuentes from Jerez de la Frontera. He loaded the ships with trade goods and provisioned them with thirty cannons and abundant supplies, essential for a long and uncertain voyage. He appointed his relative Álvaro de Saavedra Cerón captain, who sailed from the port of Zihuatanejo either on All Saints' Day [November 1] or eve in the year of 1527.

Saavedra traversed two thousand leagues according to the pilots' reckoning, although the distance does not measure fifteen hundred leagues following a direct route. He arrived alone in the flagship at an archipelago, because the wind dispersed two other ships from the convoy. Since they arrived on Epiphany [January 6], they called the archipelago Islas de los Reyes, which is located more or less eleven degrees north of the equinox. Its inhabitants are large, long-faced, dark-skinned, heavily bearded, and wear their hair long. They use canes as lances and craft handsome mats made of palm fronds that seem like gold at a distance. They cover their private parts with loincloths made of fronds and are otherwise naked. Their boats are large.

From Islas de los Reyes he went to Mindanao and Bizaya, two other islands located eight degrees [from the equinox]. These are rich in gold, pork, chickens, and rice. Their women are beautiful, the men fair-skinned, and all wear their hair long. They have iron scimitars, cannons fired with gunpowder, very long arrows, blowguns with poisoned darts, and cotton and fish-scale breastplates. They are warlike and conclude their peace treaties by drinking the blood of the new friends and

465. Borneo.
466. Sumatra.
467. Probably Zihuatanejo (and hereinafter).
468. Possibly Timor.

offering human sacrifice to their god Anito. Their kings wear crowns as we do here. The king then ruling, called Catonao, killed don Jorge Manrique, his brother don Diego, and others. The Portuguese Sebastián del Puerto, who had married in La Coruña and sailed with Loaysa, fled these islands on the ship of Álvaro de Saavedra. Serving as interpreter, he said that his master had taken him to Cebut, where he learned that eight of Magellan's Castilians had been taken from there to be sold in China and that others remained in Cebut. In sum, he recounted the entire voyage. On a different island called Candiga, Saavedra also exchanged two Spaniards who had also come with Loayza for 70 gold castellanos. He made peace with the lord, each drinking the blood of the other drawn from their arms, as is the custom there, like that of the Scythians.

He put in at Terrenate, where the Portuguese had a fortress, and then went to Gilolo, where Fernando de la Torre from Burgos was the alcaide of a castle and captain of one hundred and twenty (f. 152) of Loaysa's Spaniards. There, Álvaro de Saavedra provisioned his ship with all the supplies he needed, as well as with twenty quintales of clove of the emperor's share from Fernando de la Torre. He left on June 3, 1528, spending much time going from place to place. He put in at Isla de los Ladrones, and then at some islands where black people with curly hair lived, and at others where there were fair-skinned and bearded people with painted arms. He marveled at the short distance between the islands. He was then forced to return to Timor, where he spent many days and left for New Spain on May 8, 1529. Saavedra died on route on October 9 of the same year. His death, along with the lack of a crew and a favorable wind, caused the ship to return to Timor with only eighteen of the fifty men whom he had taken from Zihuatenejo. Because Fernando de la Torre had already lost his castle, those eighteen Spaniards left for Malacca. There, don Jorge de Castro captured and imprisoned them for two years. Ten died there (so badly do the Portuguese treat the Castilians) with no more than eight still alive. Such was the outcome of Hernando Cortés's fleet to the Spice Islands.

[Chapter 194]. How Cortés Came to Spain

Since the emperor had ordered Alonso de Estrada to substitute for Marcos de Aguilar as governor, Cortés thought that no orders would be given for him to regain his post (as His Majesty decreed), unless he negotiated it in person. He was very troubled and, although he believed himself to be without blame, nothing turned out as he desired. He had

many adversaries in Spain who spoke ill of him and little support there, which, in his absence, amounted to nothing. He thus determined to come to Castile to settle many important issues mainly for himself, but also for the emperor and New Spain. I mention only a few of these many issues: He came to marry and have children, as he was old; to appear before the king to look him in the eye and give a full account of the great land and people he had conquered and partially converted; to inform the emperor in his own words of the war and discord among the Spaniards in Mexico, fearing that he had not been told the truth; to be granted favors according to his merit and service; to be awarded a title of nobility so others would not be equal to him; and to present the king with some beneficial petitions that he had thought out and written regarding the good governance of that land.

While entertaining these thoughts, he received a letter from fray García de Loaysa, the emperor's confessor and president of the Council of the Indies, who later became a cardinal. He strongly advised and beseeched him to come to Spain to see and meet with His Majesty, pledging him his friendship and support before the king. This letter caused [Cortés] to hasten his departure and desist from settling Río de las Palmas, north of Pánuco, although he was already prepared for the undertaking. He dispatched two hundred foot soldiers, sixty horsemen, and many Mexica to the land of the Chichimeca with instructions to settle there if the land was rich in silver mines and as good as he had been told. In case they were not received peacefully, they were to wage war and capture slaves, (f. 152v) for the people are barbarians.

He wrote to Veracruz to have two good ships readied for him. He sent ahead Pedro Ruiz de Esquivel, an hidalgo from Seville, for that purpose, but he did not reach his destination, as he was later found buried on one of the lake's small islands, with one hand extended above ground eaten by dogs and birds. He was found wearing breeches and a jacket, with a single stab in the forehead. The black man who accompanied him was never found, neither were two bars of gold, his boat, or the Indians with him. It was never known who killed him or why. Cortés made an inventory of his possessions, valued at 200,000 gold pesos. He left as executors and administrators of his estate Licenciado Juan Altamirano, his relative, Diego de Ocampo, and someone called Santa Cruz. Cortés provisioned two ships, giving free passage and food to all who accompanied him. He loaded 1,500 silver marcos, 20,000 pesos of fine gold, and another 10,000 of base gold, as well as much valuable jewelry.

He brought along Gonzalo de Sandoval, Andrés de Tapia, and other conquerors who were among the most prominent and distinguished.

With him were [LdeG: a son of Moteuczoma] **two sons of the great Moteuczoma, already Christians, one named don Pedro de Moteuczoma Tlacahuepan, then lord of Tollan through his mother doña Maria Miahuaxochitl, former empress of Mexico Tenochtitlan. He was a lord and native of Tollan. The second son of the aforementioned great Moteuczoma was named don Martin Cortés Nezahualtecolotl, whose mother was also named doña Maria, a *señora*,** "honorific title; lady" **of Cupolco, which is a barrio in San Sebastián Atzacualco. She was the daughter of Ahuitzotl, who had been king of Mexico. These two princes are brothers, whom Hernando Cortés brought here to Spain.**

He also brought don Francisco de Alvarado Matlaccoatzin, who was the son of Tezozomoctli Acolnahuacatl, brother of the said great Emperor Moteuczoma, and another relative of the said Moteuczoma named don Gaspar Toltequitzin. The latter was lord in the barrio of Xoloco Acatlan, which is now where the church of our lord of San António Abad is located. Also on board was don Hernando de Tapia, an hidalgo and particular who was the son of Captain don Andrés Motelchiuhtzin Huitznahua Tlailotlac, native and resident of the principal barrio of San Pablo Teopan. The said don Andrés Motelchihutzin, although he was lord of Mexico Tenochtitlan under Christian rule, was not of royal lineage. Additionally, he brought Damián Tlacochcalcatl, resident and native in the principal barrio of San Sebastián Atzacualco, called Tomella. He was a Mexica particular also, although he had been like an oidor on the Imperial Council of the said great Moteuczoma. He also brought don Gerónimo Conchano, lord and native in the city of Santiago Mexico Tlatelolco, who descended from Quauhtlahtoatzin, third king of the same city of Tlatelolco. These are the Mexica lords. He also brought a son of don Pedro Tetlepanquetzatzin, who was king in Tlacopan, named don Gabriel Tetzapiltzintli. He brought as well (f. 153) **don Baltasar Toquezquauhyotzin, lord in Colhuacan, and another named don Felipe de Castilla Mamalquatzin, lord in Cuitlahuac, and don Pedro de Castañeda**[469] **Collemochcatl, who was also a Chalca particular, native of Tlalmanalco in the province of Chalco.** Also on board was a son of Maxixca, already a Christian, **named don Diego Atlquiauhtzin;** don Lorenzo **Tianquiztlacoatzin; and Quauhpachiuhtocatzin. These three were lords and principales in the great city of Tlaxcala. Moreover, he brought don Juan Tzihuacmitl, lord in Cempoala,** and many nobles and

469. Castañeda was an important surname in Tlalmanalco and Amecameca. C's brother was named Lucas Miguel de Castañeda, and the great account of the role of Viceroy don Antonio de Mendoza in the Mixton War in the 1540s by native ruler don Francisco de Sandoval Acacitli of Tlalmanalco Chalco was first recorded in Nahuatl by Gabriel de Castañeda.

lords from Mexico, Tlaxcala, and other cities. He brought eight jugglers, twelve ballplayers, some very fair-skinned male and female Indians, some dwarves, and other individuals with deformities. In sum, he came as a great lord.

In addition, he brought for show tigers, pelicans, an armadillo, a *tlaquacin*,[470] "opossum," an animal that carries its offspring in a pouch for feeding and whose **offspring** [LdeG: tail], according to Indian women, helps in childbirth. As gifts, he brought a great number of feather and fur mantas, fans, shields, featherwork, mirrors of stone, and the like. He reached Spain at year's end, 1528, when the court was in Toledo. The kingdom resonated with news of his fame and arrival, and everyone wished to see him.

[Chapter 195]. The Favors Granted to Cortés by the Emperor

The emperor received Cortés very well and to honor him even visited him in his lodging when he became ill and was declared near death by his physicians. Cortés told His Majesty all his thoughts, gave him the petitions he had drafted, and later accompanied him as far as Zaragoza on the emperor's route to board ship for his coronation [as Holy Roman Emperor] in Italy. In recognition of his service and his personal valor the emperor made him marqués del Valle de Oaxaca, as he had requested, on July 6, 1528.[471] He also appointed him captain general of New Spain, of the provinces and coast of the South Sea, naming him as well Discoverer and Founder of the same coast and islands. He granted Cortés and his descendants in perpetuity one twelfth of what he conquered. He offered him the habit of the Order of Santiago, but [Cortés] rejected it without an encomienda. Although Cortés requested the governorship of Mexico, the king did not grant it so that no conqueror would think it was owed him. This followed King Ferdinand's treatment of Cristóbal Colón, discoverer of the Indies, and of the Great Captain Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, conqueror of Naples.

Having conquered so much land, Cortés was very deserving of the many honors and recognition bestowed by the emperor who, as a most grateful prince, never takes back what he has given. He offered him all the kingdom of Michoacan that belonged to [the] Cazonzi, but [Cortés] rather wanted Cuernavaca, Oaxaca, Tehuantepec, Coyoacan, Matlatzinco, Atlacuhuaia, Toluca, Huaxtepec, Utlatepec, Etlan, Xalapan,

470. Nahuatl: *tlaquatl*.

471. See Juan Miralles, *Hernán Cortés Inventor de México* (Barcelona, 2002), 462, 481–82, who states that LdeG is mistaken regarding the date. The year was 1529.

Teoquihuacoyan, Calimaya, Antepec, Tepoztlan, Cuitlapan, Acapichtlan, Quetlachtlan, Tuztla, Tepecan, Atloixtan, Yzcalpan, with all their hamlets, surrounding territories, residents, civil and criminal jurisdictions, taxes, tributes, and rights. All these are large towns with extensive lands. Although other privileges and favors were granted, these are the most important and the best.

(f. 153v) [Chapter 196]. On Cortés's Marriage

Doña Catalina Suárez died without having children, and when her death became known in Castile many sought to marry their daughters to Cortés, because he was very famous and wealthy. Don Álvaro de Zúñiga, duke of Béjar, endeavored energetically to bring him into his family. Through the powers of attorney held by Martín Cortés, he arranged for the marriage of Cortés to doña Juana de Zúñiga, his niece and the daughter of the count of Aguilar, don Carlos de Arellano. As doña Juana was a beautiful woman and Count don Alonso [*sic*] and his brothers were brave and favored by the emperor, ennobling an old and distinguished lineage, Cortés considered himself advantageously married and well connected.

He brought with him five exquisite emeralds among others he had obtained from the Indians, valued at 100,000 ducats. One was cut in the shape of a rose; the second, a trumpet; the third, a fish with golden eyes, a masterpiece of indigenous workmanship. The fourth emerald was carved as a bell with a superb pearl for its clapper, set in gold with the inscription, "Blessed is He who raised you." The fifth emerald was cut as a cup with a gold base and four small chains attached to a large pearl button. The cup had a gold spout and was engraved with the legend *Inter natos mulierum, non surrexit major*, "Among those born to a woman, no greater man has risen." For this emerald alone, the best of all, some Genoese in La Rábida offered him 40,000 ducats in order to resell it to the sultan of Turkey, but Cortés would not sell it at any price. However, he later lost the jewels in Algiers when he traveled there with the emperor, as I relate in my "Sea Battles of Our Times."[472] He was informed that the empress wished to see the emeralds, and that the emperor would ask to purchase them. For this reason he sent them and many other items to his wife before appearing at court, using her as an excuse when he was asked about them. What he gave to his wife were the most precious

472. See note 130.

jewels that any woman ever had in Spain. And so he married doña Juana de Zúñiga, returning to Mexico with her and his title of marqués.

[Chapter 197]. How the Emperor Established an Audiencia in Mexico

Pánfilo de Narváez was in Spain to negotiate the conquest of the Río de las Palmas and La Florida, where he would finally die. At every turn he did nothing but complain about Cortés [LdeG: at court]. He even presented a petition to the emperor himself, with many complaints, one of which asserted that Cortés had as many gold bars as Vizcaya had iron, and offered to prove it. Although not true, it created suspicion. [Narváez] insisted on having Cortés punished, arguing that he had put out his eye and poisoned Licenciado Luis Ponce de León as he had Francisco de Garay. Because of his many petitions, they planned to send don Pedro de la Cueva, a harsh and stern man, to Mexico to behead Cortés if the accusations were found to be true. He was the king's mayordomo and later general of the artillery and comendador mayor of Alcántara. However, he did not go because at that time Cortés's letters, dated September 3, 1526, and the testimonies of Doctor Ojeda and Licenciado Pero López, the physicians who treated Luis Ponce, arrived from Mexico. (f. 154) Once Cortés was in Castile he would laugh heartily about it with don Pedro de la Cueva, saying, "Long distances invite large lies."[473]

The emperor and the Council of the Indies established a chancellory in Mexico to oversee all the litigation and affairs in New Spain. He also wanted to punish and put an end to the factions among the Spaniards and to begin Cortés's residencia because he wished to be fully informed of his service and improprieties. He also wanted to investigate his royal officials and the treasury, so he sent Nuño de Guzmán, governor of Pánuco, as its president and governor, accompanied by four licenciados appointed as oidores. Nuño de Guzmán went to Mexico in [15]29 and began handling the tribunal's affairs with Licenciados Juan Ortiz Matienzo and Delgadillo, because the others had died. He presided over a vicious residencia and condemnation of Cortés, whom he attacked with a vengeance in his absence. They auctioned all his estate for less than its worth. He was publicly denounced by a town crier with notices posted, and had he been present his life would have been in danger. Although, as they say, when one is present, one's honor is respected, it is common for judges to be fierce against those who are absent. I believe these officials

473. *A luengas vías, luengas mentiras.*

would have exhausted Cortés's patience since they harassed his friends so much that they dared not go into the streets. Thus they arrested Pedro de Alvarado upon his arrival from Spain solely for speaking out in Cortés's defense. Nuño de Guzmán blamed Pedro de Alvarado for Mexico's having rebelled on Narváez's arrival. He also arrested Alonso de Estrada and many others, blatantly wronging them.

In a short time, the emperor received more complaints against Nuño de Guzmán and his oidores than all those who preceded him and therefore removed him from his post in [15]30. Not only were Guzmán's injustice and bias verified in Mexico, but even at court and throughout Spain, as Licenciado Francisco Núñez corroborated[474] the accusations with others who came from New Spain. The oidores and president of the [Second] Audiencia pronounced against Nuño de Guzmán and Licenciados Matienzo and Delgadillo for being prejudiced against and enemies of Cortés. The Audiencia sentenced them to remunerate Cortés for what had been improperly auctioned of his estate.

Realizing that he was about to be removed as president of the Audiencia and fearing punishment, Nuño de Guzmán launched a campaign against the Teochichimeca in order to capture **Culihuacan**[475] [LdeG: Colhuacan] which, as some believe, is the Mexica's place of origin. Nuño de Guzmán took five hundred Spaniards, most of them men on horseback, some as prisoners, and others against their will. Those who accompanied him willingly were newcomers and comprised most of his contingent.

In Michoacan he captured King **Cazontzin** [Cazonzi],[476] Cortés's friend, servant to the Spaniards, and the emperor's vassal who kept the peace. Guzmán took from him, as was said, 10,000 silver marcos and much gold. Then he burned him along with many nobles and principales in his kingdom, so that they would not complain **(**since a dead dog does not bite**)**. He seized six thousand Indians as porters and servants for his army. He began to wage war, conquering Jalisco, now called Nueva Galicia, as I explained previously. He remained in Jalisco until Viceroy don Antonio de Mendoza and the [Audiencia] of Mexico had him captured and sent to Spain to give an account of his actions. They never allowed him (f. 154v) to return. If Nuño de Guzmán had been as good a governor as he was a warrior, he would have governed the best town in the Indies; however, he was in conflict with both Indians and Spaniards.

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474. C. uses *lo reprobó*, "condemned him," instead of *probó*, "corroborated."

475. (Culiacan hereinafter.) C. corrects LdeG here.

476. Here, C. inserts the honorific *-tzin*, even though Cazonzi is a Phurépecha title and not a personal name.

In the same year of 1530 that Nuño de Guzmán left Mexico, Sebastián Ramírez de Fuenleal, a native of Villaescusa who was bishop and president of the Audiencia in Santo Domingo [Hispaniola], came to inspect and reform the Audiencia [in Mexico], the city, and the land. He was given as oidores Licenciados Juan de Salmerón from Madrid, Vasco de Quiroga from Madrigal, Francisco Ceínos from Zamora, and Alonso de Maldonado from Salamanca, who ruled the land justly. They settled Ciudad de los Angeles that the Indians call Cuetlaxcoapan, meaning "Snake in Water,"[477] also called Huitzilapan, meaning "Bird in Water."[478] The name derives from two springs there, one with fetid water, the other, fresh. It is twenty leagues from Mexico on the road to Veracruz. The bishop began to free the Indians, causing many Spanish settlers to abandon the region and seek their livelihood in Jalisco, Honduras, Guatemala, and other places where there were wars and expeditions.

[Chapter 198]. Cortés Returns to Mexico

When Cortés returned to Veracruz, news of his arrival as marqués and in the company of his wife spread, and a multitude of Indians and almost all the Spaniards in Mexico came to see him under pretense of welcoming him. In a few days, more than one thousand Spaniards gathered to complain that they no longer had a livelihood and to claim that Licenciados Matienzo and Delgadillo had destroyed them and Cortés as well. They asked him whether he wished them killed [LdeG: along with the others]. Realizing their predicament, Cortés reprimanded them harshly, but gave them hope of prompt relief from their poverty by means of the fleets he would raise. So that they would not mutiny or carry out raids, he entertained them with festivities.

In order to keep Cortés separate from the Spaniards, the president of the Audiencia and the oidores ordered them to return immediately to Mexico, each resident to his town under pain of death. Cortés was almost arrested and sent to Spain for stirring up the land. However, on noticing how swiftly the lawyers proceeded, he had the decrees appointing him captain general of all New Spain publicly proclaimed in Veracruz, thereby upsetting everyone in Mexico. Afterward, he went straight to Mexico with a squadron of Spaniards and Indians and a great number of horses. When he arrived at Tetzcoco, he was ordered not to enter Mexico under threat of loss of property and person, subject to the king's mercy. He obeyed and

477. Molina, 26, has "a piece of tanned leather" for *cuetlaxtli*, thus yielding "Place of Tanned Snake Skin."

478. More correctly, "Hummingbird in Water."

complied, employing all the discretion requisite of the emperor's service and for the good of the land, which he had won with much travail. He remained there in Tetzcoco, well accompanied and with a larger entourage than was his in Mexico. He wrote to the president of the Audiencia and the oidores to give his good intentions greater credit and not give (f. 155) the Indians cause for rebellion, since the Spaniards posed no threat. The Indians, who were aware of these transactions, killed as many Spaniards as they seized in the open. In just a few days, more than two hundred Spaniards were lost, all killed by Indians in towns as well as on the roads. They had already decided and agreed to take up arms, but some informed the bishop. He grew alarmed, realizing there was no better remedy or more reliable protection than Cortés's person, name, courage, and authority. With the acquiescence and approval of the oidores and other residents who remained in the city, he called upon Cortés, beseeching him to enter Mexico. Fully escorted by his army, Cortés entered the city, truly appearing like a captain general. Everyone came out for his welcome, as the marquesa entered with him, and it was a day of much rejoicing. He and the Audiencia discussed how to resolve all the problems. Cortés took charge, capturing many Indians, burning some, loosing dogs on others, and punishing so many that in a very short time he subdued all the land and secured the roads. His exploits were worthy of a Roman reward.

[Chapter 199]. How Cortés Explored the South Sea Coast in New Spain

After Cortés rested, the president and oidores of the Audiencia demanded that within a year he send ships to explore the South Sea according to the emperor's instruction dated October 27, [15]29 in Madrid, and signed by Empress doña Isabel. If not, His Majesty would assign someone else. They did this as much to remove him from Mexico as to have him fulfill his contract with the emperor. They knew well that Cortés always had many carpenters and ships at the shipyard, but they wanted to force him to go there himself. Cortés replied that he would comply. He greatly accelerated the construction of two ships that were being built in Acapulco. In the meantime, there was an outbreak of measles that the Indians called *çahuatl tepiton*, which means "small leprosy" in contrast to the smallpox spread by the black man on Narvaez's ship, as has been said. Many Indians died from this disease, as it was new and never before seen in that land.[479]

479. In this instance, LdeG may be referring to measles.

When the ships were finished, Cortés outfitted them well with men and artillery and loaded them with provisions, weapons, and trade goods. He appointed Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, his cousin, as captain. One of the ships was the *San Miguel* and the other, the *San Marcos*. The treasurer was Juan de Mazuela; the inspector, Alonso de Molina; the *maestre de campo*, "military commander," Miguel Marroquino; the alguacil mayor, Juan Ortiz de Caver; and the pilot, Melchor Fernández. Diego Hurtado left the port of Acapulco on Corpus Christi, 1532. He followed the coast westward according to plan. He arrived at the port of Jalisco and decided to load water, not out of necessity but to replenish their containers.

Nuño de Guzmán, who governed that land, sent people to prevent their landing, either because it was Cortés who had sent them or because he did not want anyone to enter his jurisdiction without his authorization. Diego Hurtado left without loading water (f. 155v) and sailed on for two hundred leagues, hugging the shore as well as he could. Many of his men mutinied; he removed them to one ship and sent them back to New Spain in order to travel safely and without worry. He continued his route with the other ship, but, so far as I know, he did nothing worth recounting, sailing without anyone hearing news of him. On their return, the mutineers ran into bad weather and, lacking water, were forced against their will to drop anchor in a bay called Banderas. There, the natives were up in arms because of the abuses Nuño de Guzmán's men had inflicted on them. Our men landed and had to fight to obtain water. There were many foes, and they killed all the Spaniards in the ship who were unable to escape, save for two.

When Cortés heard of these events, he left for Tehuantepec, which was one of his villas located one hundred and twenty leagues from Mexico [City]. He outfitted two ships that his officers had just finished. He provisioned them abundantly, appointing Diego Becerra de Mendoza, a native of Mérida, as captain of one ship, and Fortún Jiménez, from the Basque country, as its pilot. He appointed Hernando de Grijalva as captain of the other ship, and a Portuguese named Acosta as pilot. I believe they left one and one half years after Diego Hurtado departed. They had three goals: to avenge the dead, to seek and succor those alive, and to investigate the secrets and extent of that coast. The two ships drew apart the very night they set sail and never saw each other again. Fortún Jiménez plotted with some Basques, both seamen and soldiers, and killed Diego Becerra in his sleep, probably due to a disagreement, and severely wounded others. Landing with the ship in mutiny, he had the wounded and two Franciscans disembark. He brought water on board and then sailed into Bahía de Santa Cruz. When he came on

land, the Indians killed him together with twenty other Spaniards. Two sailors went to Chiametlan[480] from Jalisco in a small boat with news of this event. They also told Nuño de Guzmán that they had found much evidence of pearls, who then went there, outfitted a ship, and sent people in search of the pearls.

Hernando de Grijalva sailed three hundred leagues toward the northwest without sighting land. For this reason he instead searched for islands and, encountering one, named it [Santo] Tomás, because he discovered it on that saint's day [December 21]. According to Grijalva, the area he explored of the island was deserted and lacked water. It is twenty degrees [from the equator] with beautiful groves and foliage, many doves, quail, falcons, and other birds. Thus fared the four ships Cortés sent to explore the South Sea.

[Chapter 200]. What Cortés Suffered on Continuing the Exploration of the South [Sea]

During this time, Cortés built another three sound ships **(**for he was always diligent in construction**)**. He had many people and ships in Tehuantepec to fulfill his contract with the emperor, expecting to discover wealthy islands and lands. When he learned of the fate of his expedition, he registered a complaint against Nuño de Guzmán with the president and oidores, asking that justice be done and his ship returned. They issued a decree and another to follow it, but they were of little use. [Cortés] was already angry with Nuño de Guzmán (f. 156) for the residencia that he instigated against him and the properties he had taken. He dispatched the three ships called the *Santa Águeda*, the *San Lázaro*, and the *Santo Tomás* for Chiametlan, while he went well accompanied by land from Mexico [City]. When he arrived [at Chiametlan], he discovered [the mutineers'] ship on its side. Everything that once was in this ship was stolen; these [goods], along with the ship's frame, were worth 15,000 ducats.[481] When the other three ships arrived, he embarked with the people and horses he could fit onto them. He appointed Andrés de Tapia as captain of the remaining three hundred Spaniards, thirty-seven women, and one hundred and thirty horses.

The first day of May in 1536 he landed where Fortún Jiménez had

480. Gerhard, *Guide*, 79, has a Chiametla as a corregimiento in the 1530s in Colima.
481. This is the ship mentioned in the previous chapter, with the *San Miguel* or the *San Marcos*, which had once been under the control of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza and had ended up beached and located in Bahia de Banderas (a place in Colima, near Chiametlan).

been killed, naming the high peak Sierras [*sic*] de San Felipe because of the date [May 1]. He named an island three leagues from there Santiago. After three days, he entered a very good port, large and safe from the wind, which he named Bahía de Santa Cruz.[482] It was there that Fortún Jiménez and the twenty Spaniards had been killed. On disembarking, he sent for Andrés de Tapia. Then, setting sail, the wind pushed them as far as two rivers now called San Pedro and San Pablo. Once beyond the rivers, the three ships again separated. The smallest arrived at Santa Cruz, another went to El Guayabal, but the *San Lázaro* was wrecked, or better put, it ran aground in or near Jalisco, and its people returned to Mexico. Cortés waited many days for his two ships, suffering greatly because they did not come. All his supplies were on the ships, and the people of the land did not cultivate maize. Instead, they depend on fruit, plants, hunting, and fishing. They are said to fish with arrows and spears, navigating rafts made of five pieces of wood joined as if in the shape of a hand. Thus, he determined to set sail in his ship in search of the others and bring back food if he did not find them.

He embarked with up to seventy men, many of them blacksmiths and carpenters. He brought a forge and rigging to build a brigantine, if necessary. He crossed the sea, which is like the Adriatic Sea. He explored fifty leagues of coast, and one morning he found himself in the midst of some reefs or shoals, not knowing how he had entered or how he could leave. Searching for an exit with a sound, he neared land and saw a ship anchored two leagues inside a cove. He tried to reach it, but could not find a pass because the waves washed over the shoals all around. The men on the ship saw Cortés's vessel and sent a small boat with Antón Cordero, the pilot, suspecting whose it was. He arrived at the ship, greeted Cortés, and came on board to guide him. He said there was sufficient depth at the breakpoint where his ship had passed. However, the ship ran aground two leagues from the shore, remaining stuck and listed. There you could hear the most valiant man cry and curse the pilot Cordero. They entrusted themselves to God and stripped, thinking to save themselves by swimming or holding on to pieces of wood. They were about to do so when two waves pushed the ship, now with a gap in the middle, into the channel the pilot had mentioned. They finally reached the ship at anchor, bailing water with the pumps. They disembarked, emptied the ship, and with the (f. 156v) capstans from both ships brought it ashore. They set up the forge, made

482. Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton, 1982), 142, 289, 292, states that for some time the site served as a pearling center. In 1535 Cortés established what Gerhard describes as a *gobierno*, or basic political unit, with an alcalde mayor in charge.

charcoal, and worked at night with torches and candles, as there is much wax there, promptly repairing the ship. In San Miguel, which is seventeen leagues from El Guayabal and near Culhuacan,[483] Cortés purchased food and grain. Each calf cost him 30 castellanos of fine gold, each hog, 10 castellanos, each sheep and each fanega of maize, 4 castellanos. Cortés left, but the *San Lázaro* hit the shoal with its sternpost and tripped the rudder. It was necessary to make more charcoal and forge the iron again.

Cortés set sail in the main ship and left Hernando de Grijalva as captain of the other, as he could not leave as readily. After two days of sailing in good weather, the lashings of the mizzen yard frayed. As the sail was furled and the clew line loosened, the mizzen yard fell, killing the pilot Antón Cordero, who slept at the foot of the mast. Cortés had to pilot since no one else could navigate as well. He sailed near the island of Santiago, which I mentioned before. There, a strong northwest wind blew, not letting him enter Bahía de Santa Cruz. He followed the coast to the southeast, one side of his ship continuously facing land. Taking soundings, he found a sand bar. He left the ship in search of water and, not finding any, dug wells in the sand, collecting eight casks of water. The northwest wind ceased in the meantime, and he sailed to Isla de Perlas, as I believe Fortún Jiménez named it, which is next to [Isla de] Santiago. The wind fell, but regained its strength later, and thus he entered the port of Santa Cruz precariously, for the channel is narrow and the waters shallow. The Spaniards he had left there were starving, and over five had died. They were so emaciated that they were unable to fish or gather shellfish, which was their sustenance. They ate unsalted plants used to make glass, and wild fruit, but not as much as they wished.[484] Cortés gave them food in small portions so they would not become ill, as their stomachs were weak. Nevertheless, because of their hunger, they ate so much that many died.

Since Hernando de Grijalva was taking so long and don Antonio de Mendoza had arrived in Mexico as viceroy, or so the people of San Miguel had informed him, Cortés decided to leave Francisco de Ulloa as captain in Santa Cruz. He would go to Tehuantepec with the ship in order to send vessels and more men to explore the coast, looking for

483. Surely, Culiacan is intended (and hereinafter). Gerhard, *North Frontier*, 5–6, 8, states that silver was discovered in the region in the 1540s and that Culiacan later became an exclave, or Spanish-controlled territory, that was separated from other regions by the vast expanse of landscape as well as hostile natives. It was governed from Guadalajara until 1734, when it became part of the region of Sinaloa.

484. See LdeG, *Cortés* (Simpson), 401, where Simpson discusses which plants these might have been.

Hernando de Grijalva along the way. In the meantime, one of his caravels arrived from New Spain looking for him. They told him that two large ships were following with many people, weapons, artillery, and provisions. He waited two days, but since they did not arrive he sailed off. He found them anchored near the coast of Jalisco and led them to the same port where he had located Hernando de Grijalva's ship stuck in the sand, its supplies rotting.

He had it scrubbed clean, (f. 157) but the faces of the men who removed the meat and worked on the ship were swollen, and they went blind from the stench and vapors. He raised the ship, placing it in deep water, since it was in good condition and without any holes. He cut yards and masts from some good trees nearby and fitted out the ship very well. He then set sail with all four ships to Santiago de la Buena Esperanza, in the region of Colima. There, two of his other ships came seeking news of him because he was taking so long and the marquesa was concerned. With these six ships Cortés entered Acapulco in New Spain.

Many stories are told about Cortés's voyages that some may consider miraculous and others a dream. I have related only the truth and what is believable. When Cortés was in Acapulco ready to depart for Mexico, a messenger from don Antonio de Mendoza brought him the announcement of Mendoza's arrival as viceroy in these lands and a copy of a letter from Francisco Pizarro addressed to Pedro de Alvarado, adelantado and governor of Guatemala. Pizarro wrote him and other governors that he had been besieged in Ciudad de los Reyes [Lima] by a **very** large contingent, and he was in such straits that he could escape only by sea. He was attacked daily and would be lost without immediate aid. Desisting from his efforts on behalf of Francisco de Ulloa, Cortés sent Hernando de Grijalva with some ships to Francisco Pizarro. They were loaded with many provisions, arms, silk clothing for himself, an outfit of sable, two chairs of state, velvet pillows, trappings for horses, and some household items he had brought for himself on his journey, but no longer needed now that he had returned. Grijalva departed, arrived there in good time, and sent the ship back to Acapulco. Cortés assembled sixty men in Cuernavaca and sent them to Peru with eleven cannons, seventeen horses, sixty coats of armor, numerous crossbows and harquebuses, many iron fittings, and other goods. Cortés was never compensated for these items, for shortly thereafter Francisco Pizarro was killed. Pizarro had sent many valuable jewels to Marquesa doña Juana de Zúñiga, but Grijalva ran off with them.

[Chapter 201]. The Sea of Cortés, Also Called Bermejo, or the Crimson Sea

In May 1539, Cortés sent another three well-armed and well-provisioned ships with Francisco de Ulloa, who had already returned with his men, with another three well-armed and well-provisioned ships to follow the Culiacan coast that turns toward the north. The ships were the *Santa Águeda*, the *Trinidad*, and the *Santo Tomás*. They departed Acapulco, stopping in Santiago de la Buena Esperanza to provision themselves. From El Guayabal, they crossed to California in search of a ship, again crossing the Sea of Cortés, which others call Bermejo. They followed the coast to its end for more than two hundred leagues, to a cove they named Ancón de San Andrés, as they arrived on that saint's day [November 30]. Francisco de Ulloa took possession of the land in the name of the king of Castile and on behalf of Hernando (f. 157v) Cortés.

The cove is located thirty-two degrees [from the equator] and even a little higher. There, the Bermejo Sea swells and falls harmoniously. With many small volcanoes and barren mountains, this is poor country. They found evidence of rams, that is, their large, heavy, twisted horns. There are many whales in this sea. The people fish with hooks made of thorns from trees and turtle shells, since the turtles are plentiful and large. The men go around naked and shorn like the Otomi in New Spain. On their chests, they wear shells that gleam like mother-of-pearl. Their drinking vessels are made from the stomachs of sea lions, although they also fashion them from clay. Hugging the other coast, they sailed from Ancón de San Andrés to California, rounding the cape and passing between some islands and the land. They sailed on until they reached **the tip of** Ancón de San Andrés. Naming this point Cabo del Engaño, they turned around toward New Spain due to contrary winds and dwindling provisions.

They spent an entire year on this voyage, with no news of any good land. It was a great fuss for nothing. Cortés hoped to find on that coast and sea another New Spain but accomplished no more than what I have told, despite all the ships and his presence. It is believed that there are large and rich islands between New Spain and the Spice Islands. He spent 200,000 ducats on the explorations, according to his own accounting, sending many more people and ships than he had intended. As we will relate later, these expenditures caused him to return to Spain, antagonize Viceroy don Antonio [de Mendoza], and file suit against the king over his vassals. Nevertheless, no one ever spent so liberally on such an undertaking.

[Chapter 202]. On Writing in Mexico

No alphabetic writing has yet been found in the Indies, a matter of no little importance. Only in New Spain are there certain signs that serve as letters. They use them to record and interpret all things and conserve their recollections and ancient history. They resemble Egyptian hieroglyphs, but as I understand they are less obtuse and hold neither less nor more meaning than [Egyptian writing]. The signs the Mexica employ as letters are large and take up much space. They are carved in wood and stone, painted on walls and on paper made from cotton and metl [maguey] leaves. The books are large, folded like mantas, with writing on both sides. Some are rolled like a piece of coarse fabric. They do not pronounce [the consonants] B, G, R, and S, but make frequent use of P, C, L, and X. This Mexica language, Nahuatl, which is the best, the richest, and the most widespread in New Spain, makes use of signs. Some people in Mexico converse and communicate by whistling, particularly thieves and lovers, a remarkable thing that our people do not understand.

(f. 158) [Chapter 203]. On the Terms for Counting[485]

There is a single, specific term for each number up to six. Then they say six-one, six-two, six-three.[486]

Ce	1
Ome	2
Ei	3
Nahui	4
Macuilli	5
Chicuazen	6
Chicome	7
Chicuei	8
Chiucnahui	9

485. The following are LdeG's spellings for the terms in bold: macuil / chicoace / chiconaui / matlac / matlactlioce / matlactlome / matlactlomei / matlactlinaui / matlactlimacuil / matlactlichicoace / matlactlichicome / matlactlichicuei / matlactlichiconaui.
486. Nahuatl has unique terms for numbers 1–5; 6 is "half (of ten plus) one."

Ten is its own number, and then they say ten-one, ten-two, ten and three, ten and four, ten and five.

Matlactli	10
Matlatli onze	11
Matlalactliomome	12
Matlactlomei	13
Matlactlonahui	14

The say ten-five-and-one, and ten-six-and-one, and ten-six-and-two, and ten-six-and-three.

Matlactli on macuili	15
Matlactli on Chicuaze	16
Matlactli on chicome	17
Matlactli on chicuel	18
Matlactli on chiuhcnahui	19

Twenty has its own number, as well as all the higher numbers.

Cempoalli	20

[Chapter 204]. On the Mexica Year

The Mexica year has three hundred and sixty days, for they have eighteen months of twenty days each, which add up to three hundred and sixty. They have another five days that are set off as a separate interval, during which time they celebrate with much devotion great feasts with cruel sacrifices. They were in error with this count, which did not coincide with the exact solar cycle. Even the year of the Christians, who are consummate astrologers, errs by many days. Nevertheless, these Indians came very close to what was accurate, and [their calendars] correlated with those of other nations.

[Chapter 205]. On the Names of the Months[487]

Tlacaxipehualiztli [LdeG: ciuailhuilt][488]

Toçoztontli

Hueitoçuztli

Toxcatl_____Tepupoxhuiliztli

Etzalcualiztli

Tecuilhuitontli

Hueitecuilhuitl

Micailhuitontli

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487. LdeG's spellings for terms in bold: tozçuztli / toxcalt / tecuilhuicintli / miccailhuicintli / pachtli / coauitlehuac.

488. In this section, C. agrees with LdeG's alternative names for, and the reordering of, the canonical list of eighteen twenty-day feasts and five nameless days that composed the Mexica 365-day count. These are significant departures, since they may represent statements about this cycle that were obtained from unknown sources. When C.'s list is compared with, for example, the composite list of feasts compiled by Ross Hassig, *Time, History, and Belief in Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 14, two important types of changes become apparent. First, C. keeps LdeG's order, which omits the feast of Atl Cahualo, "Water Is Abandoned," and which appears as the first feast in colonial accounts written by Cristóbal del Castillo and Jacinto de la Serna. He begins instead with the second feast, Tlacaxipehualiztli, "Flaying of Men." Moreover, C.'s list ends with a hitherto undocumented feast, Cauahuitlehuac, possibly translated as "Leaving Something to Be Toasted." Second, C. agrees with LdeG's alternative names for Toxcatl, Ochpaniztli, Pachtontli, and Hueypachtli. However, he does correct LdeG's erroneous spellings for the feasts of Tozoztontli, Toxcatl, Tecuilhuitontli, Miccailhuitontli, Pachtontli, and Cauahuitlehuac. C.'s final comment, "I finished a year," could be a loose Spanish gloss of the Nahuatl term *cemaniztli*, "a whole unit," which appears in a different hand in the manuscript. The following translations of the names of these festivals are primarily based on Hassig (2001): Tlacaxipehualiztli, "Flaying of Men"; Toçoztontli, "Short Vigil"; Hueitoçuztli, "Long Vigil"; Toxcatl, "Drought"; Tepupoxhuiliztli, possibly "Cutting with Axes"; Etzalcualiztli, "Eating of Bean Porridge"; Tecuilhuitontli, "Small Festival of the Lords"; Hueitecuilhuitl, "Great Festival of the Lords"; Micailhuitontli, "Small Feast of the Dead"; Hueimiccailhuitl, "Great Feast of the Dead"; Vchpaniztli, "Sweeping of the Road"; Tenahuatiliztli, possibly "Commanding (or Giving License to) Someone"; Pachtontli, "Small Spanish Moss"; Hecoztli, "Arrival"; Hueipachtli, "Great Spanish Moss"; Pachtli, "Spanish Moss"; Quecholli, "Macaw"; Panqueçaliztli, "Raising of the Flags"; Hatemuztli, "Descent in the Form of Water"; Tititl, "Shrunk or Wrinkled Thing"; Yzcali, "Sprout"; and Ciuailhuilt [*sic*], "Feast of Women." The festivals as they are listed in C's manuscript are as follows: **Toçoztontli** / Hueitoçuztli / Toxcatl / Etzalcualiztli / **Tecuilhuitontli** / Hueitecuilhuitl / **Micailhuitontli** / Hueimiccailhuitl / Vchpaniztli / Tenahuaztiliztli / **Pachtontli** / Hecoztli / (f.158v) Hueipachtli / Pachtli / Quecholli / Panqueçaliztli / Hatemuztli / Tititl / Yzcali / **Cauahuitlehuac** [LdeG: ciuailhuilt] / **I finished a year.**

Hueimiccailhuitl

Vchpaniztli_____Tenahuatiliztli

Pachtontli_____Hecoztli

(f. 158v)

Hueipachtli_____Pachtli

Quecholli

Panqueçaliztli

Hatemuztli

Tititl

Yzcali

Cauahuitlehuac. [LdeG: ciuailhuitl.] **I finished a year.**

In some towns, they change the order of the months, and in others they call them by different names, as has been noted, but most follow a standard order.

[Chapter 206]. On the Names of the Days[489]

1. Cipactli—Alligator

2. Hecatl—Air or Wind

3. Calli—House

4. Cuezpalli—Lizard

5. Cohuatl—Snake

6. Miquiztli—Death

7. Maçatl—Deer

8. Tochtli—Rabbit

9. Atl—Water

10. Yzcuintli—Dog

11. Oçumachtli—Monkey

12. Malinalli—Broom

13. Acatl—Reed

14. Ocelotl—Tiger

489. LdeG's spellings for terms in bold: coualt / mizquintli / oçumatli / coautli.

15. **Cuauhtli—**Eagle

16. Cozcaquauhtli—Vulture

17. Olin—Temper[490]

18. Tecpatl—Knife

19. Quiahuitl—Rain

20. Xuchitl—Flower

These twenty names are used throughout the year, and they match the number of days in each month. However, each month does not begin with Cipactli, which is the first name, but with whatever they wish. This results from the interval of the five separate days, and their thirteen-day week, which repeats the name cycle. For instance, if one begins the week with Ce Cipactli [One Alligator], it will not go beyond Matlactlomei Acatl, which means "13-Reed." The following week begins not with Matlactlionnahui Ocelotl [Fourteen Ocelot], which means the fourteenth day, but with Ce Ocelotl, which is the first [day of this week]. Thereafter, they use the six remaining names of the twenty. When all the twenty day [names] have been used, they begin to count anew with the first name of the twenty. However, this [first name] will not be associated with [the number] one, but with [the number] eight. This is better understood as follows:

Ce Cipa[c]tli

Ome hecatl

Ei Calli

Nahui Cuetzpali

Macuilli Cohuatl

Chicuazen Miquiztli

Chicome Mazatl

Chicuei Tochtli

Chiconahui Atl

Matlactli Yzcuintli

Matlactli onze **ocumatli**

Matlactli ome Malinalli

Xatlactli omei Acatl

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490. Molina, 76, glosses *olinia* as *menearse*, *moverse*, "to shake, move about."

(f. 159) They begin the second week with [the number] one, but this [number] one corresponds to the fourteenth day name of the month, and they say:

Ce occelotl

Ome Cuauhtli

Nahui Olin

Macuili Tecpatl

Chicuazen Quiahuitl

Chicome Xuchitl

Chicuei Cipactli

In this second week, Cipactli is the eighth day, having been the first day during the first week. This is how the third week begins, but the [day] name Cipactli will not be used. Mazatl, which was the seventh day of the first week and was not used in the second week, is now the first day of this third week. This calculation is no more obtuse than ours, which is based on the following seven [dominical] letters: A. B. C. D. E. F. G. These also cycle in such a way that A, having been the first day of a month, comes to be the fifth day of the next month, and in the third month it is the third day. The other six letters cycle in the same manner.

Ce Macatl [*sic* for Cem Acatl]

Ome Tochtli

Ei Atl

Nahui Ytzcuintli

Macuilli Oçumatli

[Chapter 207]. On the Year Count[491]

They count the years differently, for this count uses only four [names], but with one, two, three, and four they can count to one hundred, five hundred, and one thousand [years], or all that they need and wish. The [four] signs and names are Tochtli, Acatl, Tecpatl, Calli, which are Rabbit, Reed, Flint, House, and they say:

Ce Tochtli—is Year One

Ome Acatl—Year Two

Citepecpatl—Year Three

Nahui calli—Year Four

Macuili Tochtil—Year Five

Chicuazen Acatl—Year Six

ChicomeTecpatl—Year Seven

Chicuei Calli—Year Eight

Chiconahui Tochtli—Year Nine

Matlactli Acatl—Year Ten

Matlactli on ce Tecpatl—Year Eleven

Matlactli om ome Calli—Year Twelve

Matlactlomei Tochtli—Year Thirteen

This [year] count does not exceed thirteen, which is a week of years, and ends where it began.

Another week[492]

Ce Acatl—Year One

Ome Tecpatl—[Year] Two

Ei Calli—[Year] Three

Nahui Tochtli—[Year] Four

Macuili Acatl—[Year] Five

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491. LdeG's spellings for terms in bold: ome acth / ei tecpatlh / macuil tochtli / matlactlioce tecpatlh / matlactliome calli.

492. LdeG's spellings for terms in bold: macuil acatlh / chico naui acatlh / matlactlioce calli / matlactliome tochtli / ca tecpalh / macuil tecpatlh / chicome tochtli / chiconaui tecpatlh / matlactliome tochtli / matlactliome acatlh / macuil calli / chiconaui calli / matlactlioce acatlh / matlactliome taecpathl.

Chicuacen Tecpatl—**Day Six**[493]
Chicome Calli—[Year] Seven
Chicuei Tochtli—[Year] Eight
Chic nahui Acatl-[Year] Nine
Matlactli Tecpatl—[Year] Ten
Matlactli onze Calli—[Year] Eleven
Matlactli om ome **Tochtli**—[Year] Twelve
Matlactli omei Acatl—[Year] Thirteen

(f. 159v) *The Third Week of Years*
Ce tecpatl—Year One
Ome Calli—Year Two
Ei Tochtli—Year Three
Nahui Acatl—Year Four
Macuili Tecpatl—Year Five
Chicuazen Calli—Year Six
Chicome Toctli [*sic*]—Year Seven
Chicuei Acatl—Year Eight
Chic nahui Tecpatl—Year Nine
Matlactli Calli—Year Ten
Matlactli onze Tochtli—Year Eleven
Matlactli om ome Acatl—Year Twelve
Matlactli omei Tecpatl—Year Thirteen

The Fourth Week
Ce Calli—Year One
Ome Tochtli—Year Two
Ei Acatl—Year Three
Nahui Tecpatl—Year Four
Macuili Calli—Year Five
Chicuazen Tochtli—Year Six

493. Copyist error. For Year Six through Year Thirteen the copyist wrote *día*, "day," instead of *año*, "year." We have corrected the error.

Chicome Acatl—Year Seven

Chicuei Tecpatl—Year Eight

Chicnahui Calli—Year Nine

Matlactli Tochtli—Year Ten

Matlactlionce Acatl—Year Eleven

Matlactli omome Tecpatl—Year Twelve

Matlactlomei Calli—Year Thirteen

Each of these weeks, which we call indiction,[494] has thirteen years, and all four [weeks] total fifty-two [Mexica] years, which is a perfect number in this count. This is like a jubilee [year], because every fifty-two years they hold solemn feasts with grand ceremonies that we discuss below. Upon completing these fifty-two years, they begin the count again according to the above series, beginning with Ce Tochtli [One Rabbit], and so on, but always beginning with Rabbit. With this manner of counting, they have kept a record of eight hundred and fifty years. They know very well what transpired in which year, which king died and who his children were, as well as everything that pertains to history.

[Chapter 208]. On the Five Suns that Are Five Ages

The Acolhuaque understand that the gods created the world, but they do not know how. However, by their signs or legends, they imagine and assert that four suns have existed since the creation of the world, not counting the sun that now shines on them. They say that the first sun was destroyed by water, drowning the people and all things perishing. The second sun was destroyed when the sky fell upon the earth, killing the people and everything alive. They say giants lived then, and their bones are those our Spaniards found while digging mines and graves. It seems from their size and dimensions that those men were twenty palmos tall, an immense but very accurate height. The third sun went out, consumed by fire, as the world burned for many days (f. 160) and all the people and animals died cremated. The fourth sun perished by wind; the wind was so strong and wild that it brought down all the buildings and trees, even blasting away the rocks. Human beings did not die, but they turned into monkeys.

They do not say how the fifth sun, which is their current one, will end, but they recount that the world plunged into darkness when the

494. A fifteen-year period used in papal bulls and decrees; *DA*, 4:251.

fourth sun ended and that the gloom lasted for twenty-five years. Fifteen years into this period of darkness, the gods gave shape to a man and a woman who then had children, and ten years later a newly created sun appeared, born under a Rabbit day, and this is why they begin the count of their years from that day and sign. Therefore, if one counts forward from this date to the year of 1552, their sun is 858 years old.[495] They have followed their pictorial writings for many years, not only since Ce Tochtli [One Rabbit], which is the beginning of the first year, month, and day of the fifth sun, but also when their other four ancient lost suns were alive. Nonetheless, they let these writings be forgotten, saying that all things must be new under a new sun. They also say that the gods died three days after the emergence of the fifth sun, so you can see what kinds of gods they were. In time, the present gods they worship were born, and because of this legend, the friars convinced and converted the natives to our holy faith.

[Chapter 209]. The Chichimeca

There are many peoples in this land called New Spain. They say that the most ancient are the Chichimeca and that they came from a place beyond Jalisco called Acolhuacan around the year 720 after the birth of Christ, if one correlates their count with ours. Many Chichimeca came to settle around the lake of Tenochtitlan, but they died out, or their name was lost, as they mixed with other people. They did not have a king when they came to [Central Mexico]; they did not build towns or houses, as they lived in caves or forests. They went about naked, they did not sow, nor did they eat maize or other seeds or any type of grain; they survived on roots, wild plants, and fruit. Since they were skilled at shooting arrows, they killed many deer, hares, rabbits, birds, and other animals, eating their flesh raw or dried in the sun, rather than cooked. They also ate snakes, lizards, and other vermin equally dirty, disgusting, and wild. Even today, many of them live similarly in this natural state. Although they were barbarians living like beasts, they were religious and devout people. They worshipped the sun, offering snakes, lizards, and other such creatures, as well as every type of bird, from eagles to butterflies. (f. 160v) They did not make any blood sacrifices or have idols, even in the shape of the sun, which they regarded as their one and only god. Each married one woman, and she was not related by any degree. They were fierce and belligerent, and therefore they ruled over the land.

495. This would place the beginning of the Fifth Sun around Julian year 694, which is close to the beginning of at least one set of C.'s annals in the same count, 670.

[Chapter 210]. The Acolhuaque

About seven hundred and seventy years ago, the people called Acolhuaque came to these lands in the lake region. They were warlike, but civilized and guided by reason. After their arrival they began to establish their settlements, sowing maize and legumes, and employed signs instead of letters. They were illustrious people, and some of their lords **(especially their paramount lord, called Xolotzintli, from whom the kings of Tetzcoco are descended)** founded Tollantzinco on the lake, which was their first settlement. Since they came from Tollan, they first established Tollan, then Tetzcoco, and then Coatlinchan, before leaving for Colhuacan, also called Coyoacan by some, and here they settled and resided for many years. While there, they built small houses and huts on a high, dry islet in the lake that I think they called Mexico, which was surrounded by some ponds and springs. The thatched houses were the beginning of the great city of Mexico Tenochtitlan. After the Acolhuaque had been there for about two hundred years, the Chichimeca began to cast aside their rough and barbarous customs and seek relations through marriage and trade, something they had not wished or dared earlier.

[Chapter 211]. The Mexica

During this time, the Mexica arrived, a foreign and new nation among those kingdoms, although some believe that they are the same as the Acolhuaque, because they speak the very same language. They say they brought with them captains instead of lords. They too came through Tollan and along the way to the lake they established settlements in Atzcapotzalco, Tlacopan, and Chapoltepec and then they built Mexico, the head town of their dominion, because of a revelation from the devil **Huitzilopochtli**. Their estate and reputation increased to the point that they soon became greater lords in this land than the Acolhuaque or Chichimeca. They waged war on their neighbors, prevailing in many battles, and demanded tribute and taxes from those who surrendered. They would capture all who resisted, enslaving them, their wives, and their children. Their start was by means of religion, then through arms and force, and afterward through greed. Thus, they became lords of everything and founded the seat of their empire in Mexico Tenochtitlan. They counted time and kept accounts by writing with signs, which they may have taken (f. 161) from the Acolhuaque after they established friendship and kinship ties with them.

According to the Mexica's books and the common opinion of their wise and learned men, they came from a town called **Aztlan**

Chicomoztoc, and all were born of a father called Iztacmixcoatl, who had two wives. With his first wife Ilancueitl, he had six sons: the first one was called Xelhua, the second Tenoch, the third Olmecatl, the fourth Xicalancatl, the fifth Mixtecatl, and the sixth Otomitl. With his other wife Chimalmatl, he had Quetzalcoatl. Xelhua, the firstborn and the one with rights of primogeniture, founded Quauhquechollan, Itztzucan, Epatlan, Teopantlan, Tehuacan, Cozcatlan, Teotitlan, and many other towns.

Tenoch established Tenochtitlan, and its people were initially called Tenochca, according to some, and later they were called Mexica. Tenoch had many excellent descendants who ruled over the land, lords of their lineage, and many other people.

Olmecatl founded many towns in the region where Ciudad de los Ángeles [Puebla] is today, naming them Totomihuacan, Huitzilapan, Cuetlaxcoapan, and others like them.

Xicalancatl traveled farther and reached the North Sea. He founded many towns along the coast, giving his name to the two principal ones. The first, Xicalanco, is in the province of Maxcaltzinco, near Veracruz, while the second is near Tabasco. The latter is a large town with abundant trade, for it hosts large markets attended by merchants from distant lands, and its inhabitants trade everywhere. The towns are at a great distance from each other.

Mixtecatl went in the opposite direction toward the South Sea, where he settled Tututepec and then Acatlan, some eighty leagues distant, and this entire region is called Mixtecapan, a great and wealthy kingdom with good and populous towns.

Otomitl climbed the mountains that surround Mexico, establishing many settlements; the best and most central of the region are Xilotepec, Tollan, and Otumpan. These peoples are the most numerous in the land of Anahuac. Their language is very distinct, and the men shave their heads. Some say that the Chichimeca are Otomitl's issue, since both nations are vulgar, being the crudest and most abject people in this land.

Quetzalcoatl built, or rebuilt, as some claim, Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, Cholola, and many other cities. This Quetzalcoatl was a chaste, temperate, religious, and saintly man, and they take him (f. 161v) for a god. He never married or knew a woman, for he lived in absolute chastity and did harsh penance by fasting and flogging himself. It is said he preached natural law, teaching it through his works and exemplary habits. He instituted the custom of fasting, which had not been practiced before, and he was the first man in the land to offer blood sacrifice by drawing blood from his earlobes and tongue, not as is done by the Indians today, who kill countless men. This form of penance punishes and corrects the

vice of telling and believing lies, which is no small fault among them. They believe that Quetzalcoatl did not die, but vanished in the province of Coatzacoalco by the sea. They depict him in the way I have recounted, either because they are ignorant or to conceal his death. They believe him to be the god of wind, worshipping him throughout the land, particularly in Tlaxcala, Cholula, and in the other towns he founded, where they make strange rituals and sacrifices on his behalf.

As stated here, these seven brothers traveled the land, founding towns and making conquests, and it is also said that they were great warriors. This is only a summary, both because it suffices to describe the lineage and territory of the Mexica and because it abridges the tales that the Indians recount, who boast of their heritage and their knowledge of the past. While the Spaniards have attempted to thoroughly investigate the origin of the Mexica kings, they have not accepted one opinion over another. They assert only that the people of Mexico and Tetzcoco take pride in calling themselves Acolhuaque, and that those who have such lineage and language are of superior standing and quality to everyone else. The Acolhuaque are the most esteemed and feared, and their language, customs, and religion are the best and most practiced.

[Chapter 212]. Why They Are Called the Acolhuaque

The lords of Tetzcoco, who are the true lords of Acolhuacan and more ancient than the Mexica, boast of their descendance from a nobleman taller than any other in that land. They called him Acolli, which is like saying "Big Shoulders," or "He Whose Shoulders Tower Over Us," for *acolli* means "shoulder," although it also refers to the bone that begins at the shoulder and ends at the elbow.[496] Acolli was a man great in height and in all his works, particularly in the wars he won as a spirited and courageous man.

The grandest lords of Mexico, in sum, those kings among kings, call themselves Colhua, saying that they descend from Chichimecatl, a very enterprising noble (f. 162) who tied a strap to Quetzalcoatl's arm near the shoulder as he went about conferring with mortals. This was considered a great exploit, for they said "The man who binds a god will bind all mortals," and they called him henceforth Acolhuatl; as I said before, the acolli is the bone between elbow and shoulder and the shoulder itself. Acolhuatl was worthy and able to do many things and began to sire sons, such that his descendants became kings of Mexico, possessing the

496. Molina, 2v, has *ombro* [hombro]. The reference is to the humerus bone.

greatness that Moteuczoma demonstrated when Hernando Cortés captured him. It therefore appears that both are the issue of Chichimecatl, although through different lines, and they say that, in order to differentiate themselves, the people of Tetzcoco tell the first story, and those of Mexico the second.

[Chapter 213]. On the Kings of Mexico

Indigenous history recounts that the Chichimeca came to this land **seven hundred thirty-one** [LdeG: seven hundred twenty-one] years after the birth of Christ, according to our calendar. The first lord and [LdeG: most important] man they **mainly** named and noted in their kingdom's genealogy is Totepeuh. It is probable that they had no king **(**as I have said elsewhere**)**, or that they did not reveal which captain they had, or that Totepeuh lived for many years, which could be true, since he died more than one hundred years after their arrival in this land. After the death of Totepeuh, the entire nation gathered in Tollan and took as its lord Topil, Totepeuh's son, who was twenty-two years old and reigned for almost fifty years.

After the death of Topil, they were without a lord for more than one hundred and ten years, but they do not say why, or perhaps they forget the name of the king or kings who ruled during this interval. At the end of this period, in Tollan two lords were appointed due to some differences and conflicts the newly arrived had with the natives. Some think that the Chichimeca split into factions over the rulership. Since none of Topil's sons remained alive, those who wished to rule were many. In any case, it is held as true that they elected two lords and that each lord went in a different direction with his particular group or lineage. One of the lords was Huemac, and he left Tollan from one area; the other was a native Chichimeca called Nahuiotzin, who also left Tollan, going to the lake with his people. He was king for more than sixty years, since men lived for a very long time.

Quauhtexpetlatl ruled after Nahuiotzin's death, and Huetzin succeeded to office after Quauhtexpetlatl. Nonohualcatl succeeded Huetzin, and Achicometl reigned after him. Quauhtonal was Achicometl's heir, and the Mexica arrived at Chapoltepec in the tenth year of his rule. This is the account some give, making it seem as if their rule had not lasted many years.

Mazatzin succeeded Achicometl, and Queza was Mazatzin's heir. After Queza, Chalchiuhtonac became king. Quauhtlix ruled after Chalchiuhtonac's death, and Yohuallatonac was Quauhtlix's successor.

(f. 162v) Yohuallatonac was followed by Tziuhtetl, and the Mexica entered the place now called Mexico in the third year of his rule. Upon Tziuhtetl's death, Xihuitltemoc was king, and Coxcox was his succesor.

When Coxcox died, Acamapichtli succeeded to the throne. In the sixth year of his rule, a high-ranking but ambitious noble called Achitometl rebelled, killing Acamapichtli, and ruled like a tyrant over the lordship of Acolhuacan[497] for about twelve years. Not only did he murder the king, but he killed the king's six sons and heirs. Ilancueitl, who was queen—or, according to others, the nursemaid—fled with Acamapichtzin, whether son, nephew, **or grandson**, but perforce the heir to Coatlichan. Twelve years after his rule began, Achitometl fled to the forest, fearing that his people would kill him, since they had revolted. Either because of his flight, or the cruelties, deaths, affronts, and other abuses he had perpetrated, Colhuacan's residents abandoned the city. Since there was no king, the land was then governed by the lords of Azcapotzalco, Cuernavaca, Chalco, Coatlinchan, and Huexotzinco.

Raised in Coatlichan for a few years, Acamapich was then brought to Mexico, where he was highly esteemed for being the legitimate heir to a great lineage and the lord of the Colhua house and estate. Since he would become a mighty prince, when he reached the appropriate age for marriage, many Mexica noblemen strove to give him their daughters as wives. Acamapich took up to twenty of the most noble and principal women as wives, and the greatest lords of this land are their descendants. He repopulated Colhuacan so its memory would not be lost, appointing as its lord his son Nahuiotzin, **Teuctlamacazqui,** the second ruler of that name, and he settled down and resided in Mexico. Nahuiotzin was an excellent prince and a great man, and everyone complied with his will, for, as they say, fortune was on his side. He once again became lord of Colhuacan, as had been his father **or grandfather**. He was also king of Mexico, and both the Mexica empire and its fame grew under him, and the city of Mexico Tenochtitlan improved greatly during his rule, which lasted forty-six years.

A**ca**[ma]**pichtli** [LdeG**:** Acamapich] left three sons, all of whom ruled one after the other. Upon his death, his eldest son **Huitzilihuitzin** [LdeG: Viciliauitl] succeeded him on the throne; he married the heiress to the lordship of Cuernavaca, and both ruled the estate. **Huitzilhuitzin's** [Vicilihuitl] heir was his brother or son Chimalpopoca, and Chimalpopoca's succesor was Itzcoatl, who was one of his brothers or his uncle. Itzcoatl ruled over Azcapotzalco, Cuernavaca, Chalco, Coatlichan, and Huexotzinco, but he shared his rule with Nezahualcoyotzin, (f. 163) lord

497. LdeG has Acolhuacan at the beginning of this chapter and then shifts to Colhuacan.

of Tetzcoco, and the lord of Tlacopan. Henceforth, these three lords ruled and governed as many kingdoms and towns that obeyed and paid tribute to the Colhuaque, even if the principal and greatest polity was that of Mexico, the second Tetzcoco, and the third Tlacopan.

After the death of Itzcoatl, Moteuczoma **Ilhuicamina,** son of Huitzilihuitl, became the ruler, for the usage they had regarding inheritance was that the sons could not succeed their fathers in the lordship until their [paternal] uncles died, and when these uncles died, the sons of the eldest brother became the heirs, as was the case with Moteuczoma **Ilhuicamina**. Following Moteuczoma **Ilhuicamina**, one of his daughters, **called Totoztli**, succeeded him to the throne, for she was the closest legitimate heir. She married one of her relatives, **Tezozomoctli, son of Itzcoatl**, giving birth to their many sons, three of whom became kings of Mexico, one after the other, as had occurred with Acamapich's sons.

Axayacatl succeeded his mother, leaving a son whom **they** [LdeG: he] called Moteuczoma because of his grandfather. When Axayacatl died, his **eldest** brother Tizozica**tzin** became ruler. Tizozicatzin was succeeded by Ahuitzotl, who was one of his **middle** brothers. When Ahuitzotzin died, Moteuczoma began to reign, and then the year of 1503 began; it was he who was captured by Cortés.

Some say that there were many surviving sons of this Moteuczoma. Cortés says that he left three sons and many daughters. The eldest died surrounded by Spaniards as he fled Mexico; one of the other two was a madman and the other a paralytic. Don Pedro **de** Moteuczoma **Tlacahuepan**, who is still alive, is Moteuczoma's son, and the lord of one of Mexico's quarters, **which is called San Sebastián Atzacualco**. Since he is much given to drinking, he has not been elevated to the rank of a greater lord. One of Moteuczoma's daughters married Alonso de Grado, Pedro Gallego, and lastly Juan Cano from Cáceres. Before these three marriages she had been the wife of Cuitlahuactzin, **lord of Iztacpalapan, her uncle.**[498] She was baptized and named doña Isabel, and subsequently had one son with Pedro Gallego, named Juan Gallego Moteuczoma, and several children with Juan Cano. Others say that Moteuczoma had no more than two legitimate sons or daughters: Axayacatl, a son, and doña Isabel, although it remains to be determined which were the legitimate wives and sons of Moteuczoma.[499]

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498. Prior to her marriages to her three Spanish husbands, (doña Isabel) Tecuichpotzin Moteuczoma had been married to three Mexica nobles, two of whom were rulers: Atlixcatzin, Cuitlahuac, and Quauhtemoc, all relatives.

499. For background on the descendants of Moteuczoma, see Donald E. Chipman, *Motecuzoma's Children: Aztec Royalty under Spanish Rule, 1520–1700* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

After Moteuczoma was murdered and the Spaniards expelled, Cuitlahuactzin, lord of Iztacpalapan, became king of Mexico, and he was Moteuczoma's nephew, although some believe he was his brother. He did not rule for more than sixty days, although others say his reign was even shorter. He died of the smallpox brought by the black man in Narváez's company. After the death of Cuitlahuac**tzin**, Quauhtemoc became ruler. He was Moteuczoma's nephew, **or his first cousin**, and a high priest. In order to reign without worry, he killed Axayacatl, to whom the kingdom indeed belonged, and took as his wife doña Isabel **de Moteuczoma**, whom I mentioned previously. Although he defended it bravely, **don Hernando de Alvarado** Quauhtemoc lost Mexico.

[Chapter 214]. On Typical Inheritance Practices

(f. 163v) The peoples of New Spain inherit in various ways, with significant differences between nobles and commoners, some of which I will describe here. Among those who pay tribute, it is customary for the eldest to inherit all the land and possessions of his father and to support all his brothers and nephews, so long as they obey his command. Therefore, many people live in one house. They do not divide the inheritance, so as not to diminish it through succesive partitioning, which, although a good thing, creates problems. The eldest brother pays his lord all the tribute and taxes owed by his house and inheritance, but nothing more. If he lives in a town where a tribute is assessed per capita, then for each brother or nephew in his house, the eldest brother pays a certain number of cacao beans, feathers, mantas, loads of maize, or other things as tribute, and thus he is taxed considerably. This seems to be a very unreasonable tribute to those who have never heard of it; indeed, it often cannot be paid, and they are sold or taken as slaves.

When no brothers or nephews are the rightful heirs, the inheritance reverts to the lord or the people, who then give it to whomever they wish with no more than the corresponding tribute and service. Nonetheless, they always grant it to relatives of the former owners, and even if the residents receive inheritance from the towns, the income does not go to the [town] council [LdeG: but to the lord, from whom they rent the land], and thus is given as *censo perpetuo*,[500] as we say in Spain. All these properties are distributed through a lottery, and each [beneficiary] pays a prorated amount.

In other towns, all the sons inherit from the father, dividing up the

500. Rent option in perpetuity; occasionally described as a mortgage; *DA*, 2:268.

estate among themselves in the fashion that seems most fair and free. In some lordships, even if the eldest son is set to inherit, he does not take possession without the decree or consent of the town, or the license of the king to whom he owes [LdeG: and pledges] obedience. For this reason, in many instances, the other sons became the heirs. In some kingdoms, this must be why the fathers decide which one of their sons will inherit. They say that, in many towns, the father indicated which son should succeed him in the lordship. In those republics governed communally, they had a different method of inheriting, but lineage was always taken into account. The most widespread custom among the Mexica kings and great lords was that the brothers inherit before the **eldest brother's** [LdeG: lord's] children, and after them the children of the first heir. If there were no children or grandchildren, the closest relatives inherited. The kings of Mexico, Tetzcoco, and other places selected towns in their estate to give [in lordship] to their sons, or to give their daughters in dowry. Since these rulers were so powerful, they always wished to have the sons of daughters or nieces of the Mexica king be the heirs of their fathers' lordship, even if they were not the eldest and even if the kingdom did not rightfully belong to them.

[Chapter 215]. The Swearing In and Coronation of the King

Even if one brother inherited from another and the inheritance passed to the son of the eldest brother, they did not make use of their rule or title as kings until they were publicly annointed and crowned. After the king of Mexico died (f. 164) and was buried, the lords of Tetzcoco and Tlacopan, who were the greatest and best in the land, would be summoned to court, along with all the other subject and tributary lords of the Mexica empire. They came without delay if there were any doubt or disagreement about the throne, inquiring to the best of their ability, and this was no small task. Finally, the man to whom the kingdom belonged was brought to the great temple of Huitzilopochtli entirely naked, except for his private parts. In complete silence and without rejoicing, two nobles from the city, who had been **brought or** named for the purpose, took him by the arms, leading him up the steps. With no other companions, the lords of Tetzcoco and Tlacopan preceded them, wearing on their mantas insignia of their charge and responsibilities during the annointment and coronation. Very few seculars ascended to the chapels and altar, and then only to dress the new king and to carry out some ceremonies, which everyone else observed from the steps, the ground, and even the roofs, and the place was full, for many came to the celebration.

The lords advanced with great reverence, knelt before Huitzilopochtli's idol, touched a finger to the ground, and kissed it. The great priest then made an entrance in full dress, with many others wearing the surplices I have mentioned, and without saying a word they painted the heir's entire body with a very dark ink made for the purpose. They then greeted or blessed the king-elect, annointing him four times with that sort of holy water consecrated in their fashion, from a hyssop made of cane leaves and cedar and willow branches, which had some specific meaning or property. As I said before, this water was reserved from the consecration of the deity made from dough. They placed a manta painted with many bones and skulls on his head, and then dressed him with a black manta and another in blue as a second layer, both realistically depicting skulls and bones. Afterward, they placed around his neck several long red straps with many smaller strands, each of which had some royal insignia, like a pendant. They also hung on his back a small gourd filled with powder, to prevent pestilence, pain, or illness; to ward off the evil eye from old women, the spells of sorcerers, and the deceit of evil men; and to avert any harm that might come to him from any manner of evil. They also placed a small pouch with the incense they use on his left arm, giving him also a small brazier with embers of oak bark.

The king arose, scattered the incense over the embers, wafted the smoke over Huitzilopochtli with great deliberation and reverence, and took a seat. The great priest **then** came to take his oath, making him promise to keep the religion of his gods, the privileges and laws of his ancestors, to do justice without dishonor to all his vassals or friends, to have courage in war, to make the sun circle with its light, to make the clouds rain and the river waters flow, and to have the land yield all manner of foodstuffs. These and other impossible things were promised and pledged by the (f. 164v) new king.

They gave thanks to the great priest, entrusted themselves to the gods and the onlookers, and the same people who led the king up the steps came down in the same order. The people spoke, conveying their wish that his rule be a good one and that he rule for many years for their well-being. It was worth seeing how some danced while others played music, all in high spirits with the abundant rejoicing that started even before their king descended the steps. All the lords who had been on the councils [LdeG: and at court] came to pledge their obedience, presenting him with featherwork, strings of shells, necklaces, gold and silver jewelry, and mantas painted with signs of death, all to signal the dominion he now had over them. They accompanied him to a large hall and then left. The king sat down on a dais of sorts they called a Tlacatecco and did not leave the courtyard or temple during the four days devoted to prayer,

sacrifice, and penance. He ate only once a day. Although he ate meat, salt, chiles, and all the delicacies other lords favored, he fasted, bathing once during the day and again at night in a large pool, where he bled his earlobes, burning incense to Tlaloc, the god of water. He also burned incense to all the idols in the courtyard and temple, offering them bread, fruit, flowers, pieces of paper, and small reeds, all stained with the blood from his own tongue, nose, hands, and other parts of his body. After the fourth day, all the lords came to take him to his palace with great rejoicing and pleasure among his people. Few looked him in the eye after his consecration. It is not necessary to mention the other kings after having described the solemn ceremonies with which Mexico crowned its king. All, or most of them, follow the same custom, except that they stay at the foot of the temples. They would then travel to Mexico to have their rulership confirmed. Once they had returned to their land, they organized large celebrations and feasts for the confirmation of their estate, and not without drinking sprees and the eating of human flesh.

[Chapter 216]. The Nobility of a Teuctli

Only the son of a lord can aspire to become a teuctli, which is the greatest office and dignity, save for that of king.[501] Three years before receiving the habit of this noble office, the teuctli would invite all his relatives and friends to a celebration. The lords and *tetecutin*[502] of the region came in order to determine whether the day of the feast fell on a good sign, so [the office] would begin auspiciously. All the townspeople followed the new noble to the great temple of the god Camaxtli (who was the greatest idol of the republics). The lords, relatives, and friends who had been invited took him up the steps to the altar. They all knelt before the idol, and the nobleman remained there devoutly, humbly, and patiently. The great priest emerged, and he drilled several small holes in the nobleman's nose between the skin and the cartilage, using a sharp tiger bone or an eagle's claw. He then placed a few small jet stones in these openings, black and of no other color. Afterward, the priest humiliated him, insulting him with words and by his actions, stripping the nobleman naked (f. 165) except for his private parts. The nobleman then retreated naked to one of the halls in the temple to keep vigil over his weapons. He sat on the floor and remained there deep in

501. It is interesting that C. furnishes no commentary here. In his Nahuatl annals, he has little use for the term *teuctli*, other than as a part of an official title, preferring *pilli* to describe individuals of high rank and office.

502. Plural of teuctli. The manuscript has thecuitlis as the plural, but this is an error.

prayer. His guests ate with great rejoicing, but later took their leave without speaking to him.

At dusk, some priests brought the teuctli rough and foul mantas to wear, a mat, one pillow for his head, and another to sit on, along with ink to blacken his body, metl thorns to bleed his earlobes, arms, and legs, and a brazier and resin to burn incense to the idols. If any visitors were with him, they were removed, leaving only three old soldiers experienced in war to instruct him and keep him awake. He did not sleep for four days, except for a few short periods while seated, for the soldiers kept him awake, pricking him with metl thorns. He would burn incense to the idols every night at midnight, offering them drops of blood he drew from his body. He circled the courtyard and the temple once, digging four equally spaced holes, where he buried paper, copalli, and reeds with blood from his earlobes, hands, feet, and tongue. He broke his fast then, for the nobleman had not had a meal in four days, with [only] four little maize rolls or fritters and a cupful of water. At the end of the four days, he asked the priests for permission to fulfill his vocation in other temples, for he could not return to his house or lie down with his wife, even if he had one, during this time of penance.[503]

At the end of the year and thereafter, whenever he wished to leave, the teuctli waited for a day with a good sign to depart as auspiciously as he had arrived. On the day he was to take his leave, all the people returned who had honored him earlier. Early in the morning, they washed and cleaned him well and led him back to Camaxtli's temple with much music, dancing, and rejoicing. They went up the steps near the altar, took away the coverings he wore, and tied his hair with a red leather strap at the back of the neck from which they hung some feathers. They also covered him with a fine manta, placing another very rich one over the first, and this was the habit and insignia of a teuctli. They placed a bow in his left hand, and some arrows in his right. The priest then gave a speech, which in sum stated that he must take seriously the noble office he had assumed. Now that the teuctli had a new habit, dress, and title, he should strive for an even greater disposition, nobility, generosity, and other virtues and good works. He would defend their religion and the fatherland, protect his people, destroy the enemy, and always be courageous in war like an eagle or a tiger, for this was why his nose, the highest and most notable part of a man's face and where his shame resides, had been pierced with claws and bones. The priest bestowed another name on him and bade him farewell with a blessing.

503. LdeG may be thinking of the induction of high-ranking Spaniards into a military order as he describes this procedure.

The lords, foreign **noblemen,** [LdeG: guests], and locals sat down to eat in the temple courtyard, and the residents sang and played music that suited the festivity, dancing the netotiliztli. This meal featured many types of dishes and much game and fowl, for **on occasion** they would eat one thousand (f. 165v) or fifteen hundred turkey hens, and there is no reckoning of all the quail, rabbits, hares, deer, and neutered, fattened dogs that were consumed at that time. They also served snakes and other serpents cooked with much aji, **or chiles,** [LdeG: something] that seems incredible, but is true. I cannot describe the many fruits, flower garlands and bouquets, and containers filled with perfume that were placed on the tables [where] [LdeG: but I will say that] they charmingly became inebriated with their wines. No one was treated as a poor relative at these feasts, for the teteuctin, lords, and main guests were given featherwork, mantas, headdresses, shoes, lip plugs, and earrings made of gold, silver, or valuable stones. The gifts varied according to the riches and spirit of the new teuctli and the station of the guest thus honored. Great offerings were brought for the temple and its priests. The teuctli inserted pieces of gold, small pearls, turquoise, emeralds, and other precious stones in the incisions the priest had made in his nose, for the jewels set these noblemen apart from the rest. In war, he would also tie his hair on top of his head. He would be the first to take an oath, make treaties, and give gifts, and preside over banquets and feasts at war and in peace. He would have a small bench brought behind him so he could take a seat wherever he wished. Such was the rank of Xicotencatl and Maxixca, a great friend of Cortés, and this is why they were captains and such prominent persons in Tlaxcala and their land.

[Chapter 217]. What the Mexica Understand About the Soul

The Mexica thought the soul was immortal and that it suffered or rejoiced according to how their life was lived. Their religion was directed toward this concept, which was most clearly manifested at their funerals. They believed that there were nine places in the world where the dead went to live, one close to the sun, and that the good men, those who died in battle and as sacrificial victims, all went to the house of the sun, while the evil remained here on earth. Likewise, children and the stillborn went to one place; those who died of old age and disease went to another; those who died suddenly or violently went to yet another. Those who died of wounds or contagious diseases, the people who drowned, those executed for crimes such as theft or adultery all went to different places. Those who killed their parents, children, or wives had their own

house; and those who killed any lord or priest also had their own place. Usually, commoners were buried, while lords and wealthy men were cremated and their ashes wrapped in shrouds and buried, since their burial practices were very different. The Mexica were more richly dressed in death than in life. Men, women, and children were wrapped in shrouds, each in a different fashion. The one who died for commiting adultery was dressed like the God of Lasciviousness, Tlazolteotl[504]; those who died by drowning, as Tlaloc, God of Water; drunkards, as Ome Tochtli, God of Wine; warriors, as Huitzilopochtli; and officials were given the outfit (f. 166) worn by their respective idols.

[Chapter 218]. On the Burial of Kings

When a king of Mexico fell ill, masks were placed on Tezcatlipoca, Huitzilopochtli, or other idols, and they were not removed until he recovered or died. Upon his death, word was sent to all the towns in his kingdom, so he would be mourned. All the lords who were relatives and friends and who were able to come to the funeral within four days were called, for the commoners were already present. They laid the body on a mat and held a vigil for four nights, crying and lamenting his loss. After washing his body, they cut a lock of hair from the top of his head and put it away, saying that the memory of his soul resided in it. They placed a fine emerald in his mouth, shrouded him in seventeen very richly woven mantas of many colors, and all bearing the insignia of Huitzilopochtli, Tezcatlipoca, another idol to whom he was devoted, or the god in whose temple he chose to be buried. They covered his face with a mask elaborately painted with devils and decorated with many jewels, stones, and pearls. The slave charged with building fires and burning incense to the gods in the palace was killed at the same site. As the king's body was taken to the temple, some went there weeping, while others sang of the king's death, for such was the custom. The dead king's lords, noblemen, and servants carried shields, arrows, clubs, flags, feather headdresses, and other similar items to throw into the bonfire. The high priest and his retinue received them at the courtyard entrance, intoning plaintive words. He ordered the offerings with all the jewels thrown into the fire lit for the purpose. Weapons, featherwork, and flags honoring the king were also thrown in, as well as a dog shot through the throat with a large arrow that would guide the king where he was to go after his death.

504. Generally considered to be a female deity.

While the bonfire consumed king and dog, the priests sacrificed two hundred people, although the number could vary. They opened their chests, took out their hearts, and threw them into the king's fire, placing their bodies in a common grave. Those killed to honor and serve their master in the next century, as they say, were mainly his slaves, or those of lords who offered them, and included dwarves, cripples, monsters, and women. They placed the dead king in his house, filling the temple with roses and flowers and things to eat or drink, but no one touched them save a priest, for these were offerings.

The next day they gathered the king's ashes, his teeth, which never burned, and the emerald placed in his mouth to deposit them in a coffer painted on the inside with devil-like figures (along with his lock of hair) and other locks cut when he was born and preserved for this purpose. They secured the coffer, placing a wooden image on it (f. 166v) shaped and dressed in the likeness of the king. The funeral lasted four days, during which time the dead king's daughters and wives brought grand offerings, leaving them where he was burned, and before the coffer. On the fourth day, they killed fifteen slaves, more or less, for the sake of his soul. Twenty days later, they killed five, sixty days later, three more, and eighty days later, which was like the end of a year for them, nine more.

[Chapter 219]. How the Kings of Michoacan Are Cremated for Burial

The king of Michoacan was a great lord who competed in importance with the king of Mexico. When he was close to death and his physicians had lost all hope of recovery, he named as king the son he chose for his heir. The son sent for all the lords and governors, captains, and courageous warriors of the kingdom who had served his father to come and bury him. Those who did not attend were punished as traitors. All came with gifts, a sign of their approval of his rule. When the king was at the point of death, the doors of the hall were closed so no one could enter and his insignia, seat, and royal arms placed under an arcade of the palace courtyard. The lords met there with other nobles, and when the king died, they and all the other attendants issued a great lamentation. They entered the room where their king lay dead, touching him with their hands and bathing him with perfumed water. They dressed him in a gossamer gown and put on his feet shoes made from deerskin, which are the shoes of those kings. They secured small gold bells on his ankles, turquoise bracelets on his wrists, gold bracelets on his arms, and on his neck, necklaces of turquoise and other precious stones. On his ears, they dangled gold

earrings, in his lip, they inserted a turquoise lip plug, and on his back, they hung a long braid of beautiful green feathers. They laid his body on a fine mat on a wide litter, placing on one side a bow, a quiver covered in tiger skin, and many arrows; and on the other side, a lifesize figure made of fine cloth, dressed with a grand and precious array of long green feathers, a braid, shoes, bracelets, and gold necklace.

While some people dressed the king, others washed the men and women who were to be killed to accompany the king to hell. They were made to eat well and drink until inebriated, so they would not suffer [LdeG: much] when killed. The new lord selected the individuals who would go to serve the king his father [after death], for many were not pleased to receive this honor and privilege. Some, however, were so simple-minded or deceived that they thought it a glorious death. The persons chosen were mainly seven noblewomen and señoras,[505] one to carry all the lip plugs, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and (f. 167) rich jewels that the dead king wore; a second, to serve as cup bearer; a third, to wash his hands; a fourth, to hold the urinal; a fifth, to cook; and a sixth, to serve as his laundress. They also killed many other slaves and free servants. There was no accounting of the number of slaves and free men killed on the day of the king's burial, as one or more from each station was sacrificed. Once the chosen were washed, well fed, and inebriated, they dyed their faces yellow and placed two flower garlands on their heads, and then marched as in procession in front of the king's body. Some sounded seashells, others bones, still others turtle shells, while others whistled, and I believe that all wept.

The dead king's sons and the principales carried the litter on their shoulders, walking slowly to the temple of their god Curicaneri. The relatives surrounded the litter and sang some very sad songs. The servants, warriors, and those in charge of justice and war carried fans, banners, and various weapons. They left the palace at midnight, their large torches lit, with great sounds of trumpets and drums. The residents of the streets they passed swept and washed the ground thoroughly. When they reached the temple, they walked four times around a bundle of pine firewood gathered to burn the body and placed the litter on top. When the bundle was lighted from beneath, the dry wood ignited instantly. The garlanded men and women were beaten on the head with heavy sticks and buried in groups of four **(**with the outfits and items they wore**)** behind the temple at the foot of the wall. At dawn, after the fire had gone out, they collected

505. LdeG's distinction between *mujeres nobles* and *señoras* is unclear; it may be an example of his use of parallel terminology in his prose. For other possible examples of such phrasing, see ff. 3, 6, 8, 8v, 10, and 10v.

the ashes, bones, precious stones, and melted gold in an elaborate manta and carried it all to the door of the temple.

The priests came out, blessing the diabolic relics and wrapping them in the manta and in other mantas. They took a figure and dressed it very well, like a man, with a mask, feathers, bracelets, beads, jewels, lip plugs, and small gold bells, and with a bow, arrows, a gold shield, and feathers on its back, so that it resembled a very well-adorned idol. They then dug a square grave, wide and deep and measuring two estados at the foot of the steps and covering all four sides and the ground with fine, new mats. In it, they constructed a bed. A priest, whose function it was to carry gods on his back, entered carrying the figure, and lay it on the bed, its eyes fixed on the east. The priest hung many gold and silver shields on the mats, along with many feather headdresses, arrows, and a bow. He brought vessels, pots, plates, and jugs; in sum, he filled the grave with coffers covered with leather containing clothes, jewels, food, and weapons.

When he finished, the grave was sealed with beams and pieces of wood and covered with a clay floor, and afterward everyone left. The lords and other persons who came to see the king's burial and participate in it washed themselves thoroughly. They ate seated in the palace courtyard, but without a table. They cleaned themselves with cotton bolls. Keeping their heads lowered, they were gloomy (f. 167v) and quiet, saying only, "Give me something to drink." Their mourning lasted five days, and no fires were lit in any of the houses of the city of Tzintzuntzan, except for the palace and the temples. No maize was ground with stone nor any markets held, and no one walked in the streets. In conclusion, they expressed their deepest feelings upon the death of their lord.

[Chapter 220]. On Children

It is customary in this land to greet the recently born child with the words, "Oh, little creature, you have come into the world to suffer; therefore, suffer, abide, and remain silent." They then dab a small amount of quicklime on its knees, as if to say, "You are alive now, but you must die; for your many labors, you will turn into dust, like this quicklime that once was rock." They celebrate the occasion with dances, songs, and food.

It was the general custom that mothers did not nurse their children the entire first day after they were born, so they would be hungry and take the nipple eagerly and with much appetite. Ordinarily, the children nurse four years straight, and in some lands, twelve years. The cradles

are made of reeds or thin sticks, and are very light so they can be carried easily. The mothers and nursemaids carry the infants suspended from their necks and backs, wrapping them completely in a shawl and tying the ends around their chest, and in such a fashion, they carry them on the road and nurse them over their shoulder. The women try not to get pregnant while they are nursing, and the widow does not marry until she has weaned the child, as it would be risky for her to do otherwise.

In some parts, the people submerge the children in pools, springs, rivers, or earthen jars the first day they are born to toughen their skin and flesh, or perhaps to wash off the blood, foul smell, and filth that they bring from their mother's womb. Some nations here follow the same custom. After this, if the child is a boy, they place an arrow in his right hand, and if a girl, a spindle or a shuttle, signifying how they will make their way through life; if a boy, with weapons; and, if a girl, with a distaff.

The children were bathed seven days after they were born in certain towns and in others, ten days after. To teach them that one should command and the other obey, they placed a shield in the boy's left hand and an arrow in his right, and in the girl's hand they placed a broom.[506] At the time of this bath, they gave them a name, not just any name, but that of the day on which they were born. And after the equivalent of our three months, the children were taken to the temple, where a priest who knew the count and had knowledge of the calendar and signs gave them another name, a surname, with much ceremony, declaring the favors and virtues of the idol whose name he gave them, and predicting their good fortune. On such days, everyone ate very well and drank even better, as they were considered ungrateful guests if they did not leave the festivities drunk. Leaving aside the names for the seventh and sixtieth days, some lords took another name, such as Teuctli or Pilli, but this was (f. 168) a rare occurrence.

The son's punishment was left to the father, and that of the girls, to the mother. The parents whip them with thistles, blow smoke up their noses while hanging by their feet, tie the girls by the ankles so they do not leave the house, and cut them on the lip and the tip of the tongue so they will not lie. All the Indians are great liars, and to correct and cure them of this vice, Quetzalcoatl ordered the sacrifice of the tongue. Many paid a high price for their lies when our Spaniards first won the land, because when asked where the gold and rich tombs were, the Indians

506. For more about Mexica children and ritual practices, see Louise Burkhart, "Mexica Women on the Home Front: Housework and Religion in Aztec Mexico," in *Indian Women in Early Mexico*, ed. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman, 1997), 25–54.

responded, "They are in such and such a place." When the Spaniards did not find them, even after much digging, they would break their limbs, tormenting and beating them, and even loose their dogs on them.

The men taught their sons their profession, not because someone else could not teach them, but so the fathers would save themselves the cost. Wealthy men, in particular noblemen and lords, sent all their sons to the temples for five years, and for this reason there were many men in each temple, as I said before. There was a teacher for their instruction. This assembly of boys had its own land for their sustenance. They had their own rules, telling them to fast so many days of the month, when to bleed themselves during the ceremonies, when to pray, and not to go out without permission.

[Chapter 221]. [LdeG: On the Enclosure of Women]

Behind the great temples in each city, there was a very large hall and room where many women ate, [LdeG: slept], and lived their lives. Even though the halls did not have doors, the women were safe inside, because they did not make use of the doors they had. And our Spaniards would often comment on the meaning of these openings and of freedom, knowing that even where there are doors, men lack walls, intentions, and goals. Although the women who slept in the house of the gods had these, none entered to remain there all her life, although there were some old women among them. Some entered because of illness, others, because of need, and still others, because they wished to be virtuous women. Some entered so the gods would bestow riches on them, many so they would enjoy a long life, and all so they would be given good husbands and many children. They promised to serve and remain in the temple one, two, and three years or longer, and afterward, they married. The first thing they did when they entered the temple was to shave their heads, either to differentiate themselves from the rest, or because the priests of the same temple wore their hair long.

The women's tasks were to spin cotton and feather cloth and to weave mantas for themselves and the idols. They also swept the courtyard and halls of the temple, as the ministers swept the steps and high chapels. They practiced some bloodletting on their bodies to appease the devil. They attended celebrations and solemnities, and, if need be, went in procession with the priests, the men in one line, and the women in another, but they did not climb the steps or sing. They lived solely from charity, since they were supported by their relatives, the wealthy, and the faithful, who gave them cooked meat and warm bread to offer the idols. (f. 168v)

Such offerings were made regularly, their aromas wafting on high to please the gods. They ate their meals communally and slept together in a hall like nuns, or better yet, like sheep. They did not undress, they say, for modesty's sake and to arise more quickly to serve the gods and begin work, although I do not know which piece of clothing some who went about almost naked might have removed. They danced during the festivities held to celebrate the gods, following their calendar. If a woman spoke or laughed with a man, whether secular or religious, she was chastised, and the woman who sinned with a man was killed together with him. They believed that their flesh would rot if they lost their virginity there, and for fear of punishment and ignominy, they behaved chastely while there. However, the women who misused their bodies in this way did great penance and remained in the temple.

[Chapter 222]. On the Many Women

Wealthy men, warriors, and lords marry many women; some have five wives, others thirty, and others still have as many as one hundred or one hundred and fifty. One king married even more, so it is not surprising that there are many brothers, all of them sons, from the same father, but not from the same mother. Thus, Nezahualpiltzintli and his father Nezahualcoyotzin, who were lords of Tetzcoco, each had one hundred sons, and about the same number of daughters. There are some provinces and peoples, such as the Chichimeca, Mazateca, Otomi, and Pinolteca, in which men do not take more than one wife and she is not a relative. However, it is also true that, outside Mexico, the lords and noblemen take as many as they wish. In some parts, they buy women; in others, they steal them; and generally, they ask for them from their fathers in two ways, either as wives or as friends. They give four reasons for having so many women: the first is the sin of the flesh, in which many take pleasure; the second is to have numerous children; the third, for their standing and service; and the fourth, for profit. The warriors marry mostly for the last reason. The men who live in the palace, as well as the shiftless and gamblers, make their wives work as slaves and weave cloth for sale to sustain them and their gambling. They marry at twenty years, and even younger, and the women, at ten.

Although they do not marry their mothers, daughters, or sisters, they do not respect many other relationships. However, if some are found married to their own sisters at baptism, they leave their many women and remain with only one. They married their sisters-in-law and their stepmothers who had no children with their fathers, although some claimed

that these marriages were illicit. Nezahualcoyotzin, lord of Tetzcoco, killed four of his sons (f. 169) because they slept with their stepmothers. In Michoacan, they would take as their wife their own mother-in-law, being married first to the daughter, and thus, they took both a daughter and a mother. Even though many women were taken by men, some were considered legitimate wives, others, friends, and still others, concubines. Those women whom men pursue after they are married are called friends and those they take, concubines. The sons of women with dowries inherit from their fathers, and the sons of high nobles and lords whose mothers come from the lineage of the king of Mexico also inherit, even if the women with dowries have older sons.

[Chapter 223]. Marriage Rites

The bride always goes to the groom's house to keep a vigil the night before the wedding, and usually she goes on foot, although in some parts, the bride is carried in arms, and if she is a noblewoman, she is carried on a litter. The groom receives her at the door, perfuming her with incense from a small coal brazier that burns a fragrant resin. She is given another brazier, with which she perfumes the groom. Taking her by the hand, he leads her to the nuptial bed. They sit by the fire on a new mat; there, people similar to godparents come to tie their mantas together and, remaining bound, the groom gives the bride some dresses as gifts and she gives him men's clothing. When the food is brought out, the groom feeds the bride by hand, and she does the same. In the meantime, while the marriage rites are taking place, the guests dance and sing, and after the meal, they give the couple presents in order to honor them. Shortly afterward, a lengthy dinner is served, and with the rejoicing and the heat of the food, which is prepared with much chile, the guests drink so much that when night falls, not a few are drunk.

Only the couple kept their heads clear, since they ate sparingy and in this, they acted like a typical wedding couple, since they had hardly eaten the preceding four days. All they had done was pray and bleed themselves as an offering to the god of marriage. They do not consummate the marriage in all that time, nor do they leave the wedding chamber for their physical necessities, which no one can avoid, or go to the oratory of the house to perfume the gods with incense. They believed that by leaving the chamber, especially if the bride did so, she would harm or deform her body. They perfumed the bed when they wanted to sleep. At that time, and also when they visited the altars, they dressed with the insignia of the god of marriage. On the fourth night, some elderly priests came to

make the spousal bed. They joined two newly made, unused mats, and placed at the center some feathers, a chalchihuitl stone, which is like an emerald, and part of a tiger skin. They covered all this with the best cotton mantas in the house, arranging at each corner of the bed some cane leaves and metl thorns. The priests recited certain phrases and left. The couple perfumed the bed with incense and retired.

This was the true wedding night for the spouses. The next morning they brought to the temple as offering the bed with all it contained, the blood spilled from the bride by the groom, as well as the blood that the couple had bled over the cane leaves. The priests returned, (f. 169v) and while the couple bathed on green mats made of reeds, one of the priests sprinkled water four times on them as a blessing in reverence to Tlaloc, God of Water, and another four times in reverence to Ome Tochtli, God of Wine. If the couple were nobles, the priests would sprinkle water on them with feathers. After this ceremony, the couple dressed in new or clean clothes. The groom was given a sacred censer with which to perfume the idols of his house. The bride was adorned with a white feather on her head and with red feathers on her hands and feet. With the bride so decorated, the guests sang and danced and drank even more heavily than before.

The poor and the slaves did not hold these ceremonies, but had others that served to join them as couples. Those who married their concubines did not celebrate rites. It is said that if the mother or father of a concubine demanded the lover to marry her because he had children with her, then the man must do so or never return to her. In Tlaxcala and in many other cities and nations, it is customary for the grooms to shave their heads as a sign of marriage, abandoning their youthful hair and looks from then on in order to grow another kind of hair. The most important ceremony held in Michoacan is that of the vigil, when the bride and groom gaze and stare at one another throughout the occasion, for otherwise it appears that they are rejecting one another, and the marriage is considered invalid.

In the province of Mixtecapan, the groom is carried on someone's shoulders part of the way when he marries, as if to say, "Although you do not wish to, you must marry to have children." The couple shakes hands as a sign that each will help the other. Their mantas are tied together in a large knot so they will know that they must never separate.

The Mazateca do not lie together the night they marry or consummate the marriage for the first twenty days. Instead, they spend all that time fasting and praying, and as they explain, in penitence sacrificing their bodies and smearing the mouths of the idols with their blood.

In Pánuco, the men purchase the women for one bow, two arrows, and a net. The bride's parents do not speak to their son-in-law the first year

of the marriage. The men do not sleep again with their wives until two years after childbirth, so they will not become pregnant before weaning their children, who nurse for twelve years. For this reason, the men have many women. No one eats what a menstruating woman touches or cooks, only she does.

Divorce was carried out only for very just cause or with the authority of the court. It was for legitimate wives whose marriage had taken place publicly, as the others could be abandoned as easily as they had been taken. In Michoacan, a couple could separate by swearing that they did not respect one another; in Mexico, by proving that the wife was bad, filthy, or sterile, although they could be abandoned without cause or order from judges. The woman's hair was singed in public as an insult and sign that she had no sense. The punishment for adultery was death; both the woman (f. 170) and the man were put to death. If the adultery is committed by a noble, after being hanged his head is feathered with a green plume, and he is burned. This crime is punished so severely that the law never forgives the **drunkard** or the woman, although the husband may forgive his wife. To discourage adultery, prostitutes are permitted, but there are no public houses of prostitution.

[Chapter 224]. On Men's Customs

To speak of the Mexica is to speak in general of all New Spain. The men are of medium height, although stocky. Their complexion is tawny, their eyes large, their forehead wide, their nose broad, their hair thick, black, [LdeG: long], and in a tuft. There are very few who have curly hair or full beards, as they pluck and oil their facial hair so it does not grow. Some are albinos and a marvel. They paint themselves heavily to look ugly for battle and dancing. They cover their heads, arms, and legs with feathers, fish scales, or tiger skins and skins of other animals. They make large perforations in their ears and noses, and even their chins, in which they insert precious stones, gold, and bone. Some put eagle claws and beaks, others, animals' fangs, or fish bones in the openings. The lords, noblemen, and the wealthy have them made of gold and precious stones, with which they go about very attractive and fierce, or so they think. They wear shoes that resemble espadrilles, loincloths for pants, and wear a square manta tied at the right shoulder like Gypsies. Wealthy men, or men attending ceremonies, often wear a variety of mantas of different colors, but nothing else underneath. They marry at twenty years of age, although the men of Pánuco first waited until they were forty. They take many women in marriage and outside marriage, whom

they can abandon, but not without cause, particularly if one is a legitimate wife. In the main, the men are extremely jealous and therefore beat the women often. The men carry weapons only during war, at which time they settle their arguments by challenging their opponents.

The Chichimeca do not allow merchants from outside the region, since the majority of their men are great traders, but they trade unfairly, buying and selling in a constant give-and-take. They are thieves, liars, and shiftless men. The fertile land must be the reason for their laziness, or perhaps they are not greedy. They have much talent and ability in what they do. They have learned all our crafts quickly and most have done so without teachers, solely by observation. They are passive, cajoling, and subservient, especially with the lords and kings, and exceedingly religious, although cruel, as we shall soon relate. They are much given to sins of the flesh, with men as well as with women, and without shame or embarrassment. They divine the future frequently and have books and people versed in auguries.

[Chapter 225]. On Women's Customs

The women have the same complexion and facial characteristics as their husbands; they go barefoot, wear shifts with half-sleeves, and are naked underneath. They grow their hair long, blackening it with earth for cosmetic purposes or to kill lice. Married women wrap their hair around their heads with a knot in front. The virgins and women soon to be married wear it loose and combed toward the back. They shave and use unguents to remove (f. 170v) hair, except for that on their heads and eyebrows. They consider it beautiful to have a low forehead, a full head of hair, and a flattened nape. They marry at ten years of age and are very lascivious. They give birth soon and often; they pride themselves on their large, pendulous breasts, and nurse their children with their breasts over their shoulder. Among other substances that they spread on their faces is the milk from the pit of the *tezonzapotl*[507] or mamey, although they do this more to prevent mosquito bites, as the insects are repelled by the bitter substance. They treat one another with herbs, not without some sorcery, and thus, many **miscarry** [LdeG: abort] secretly. The midwives ensure that the babies not have a round nape, and the mothers place them in the cradle face up so the nape will flatten, as they value not having one. They have thick heads because they do not cover them. They bathe often, taking cold baths. When they emerge from **the**

507. Nahuatl: *teçontzapotl*, "a type of fruit, possibly related to the sapodilla tree." See Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, 11:118.

cold baths they enter in hot [LdeG: baths], which seems harmful. They work [LdeG: fearfully] hard and are very obedient. They do not dance in public, although they drink wine and dance with their husbands, if the king does not order otherwise. They spin with the tuft in one hand and the spindle in the other, twisting the thread in the direction opposite to what is done here, with the spindle in a bowl. Although the spindle has no hook, they spin fast and well.

[Chapter 226]. About the Household

Several married couples live together in one house, either so the brothers and relatives may be together and not divide the inheritance, or because the towns are crowded, though large, as are some houses. They cut, smooth, and mold stones with a stone. Their best and strongest stone is dark green flint, with which they work and cut. They also have axes, drills, and chisels made of copper mixed with gold, silver, or tin. They quarry stone with clubs, and with clubs they make knives from jet and another, harder stone which is notable. They work stones so well with these tools that it is something to see. They paint their walls in bold colors. The lords and wealthy men use cotton and feather ornamental coverings with many figures and in many colors, all very rich and bright, with finely woven palm mats, which is very common. There are no doors or windows to close; everything is in the open, and because of this they often catch and punish adulterers and thieves. They light their houses with torches and other wood sticks, although they have wax, which is much to marvel at. They now value and praise wax and tallow candles and the lamps that burn with **chia oil** [LdeG: They extract oil from chia] and from other seeds for paint and medicine, and fat from birds, fish, and animals, but do not use them for illumination.

They sleep on straw or mats, or at most, on mantas and feathers. They lay their head on a stick or rock, at the most on a small pillow made of palm leaves on which they also seat themselves. They have some low chairs with backs made of palm leaves on which they sit, although they usually sit on the ground. They eat on the ground, filthily, as they clean themselves on their clothes, and even today, they slice eggs with a hair which they pull from their heads, saying that they did so before and that it suits them still. They eat little meat, I believe because they do not have much, but they enjoy bacon and fresh pork. They do not like mutton or goat because the meat smells bad to them, a notable thing, since they eat whatever living things they find, even their own lice, which

is nauseating. Some say that they eat them for health reasons; (f. 171) others, for gluttony; still others, for hygiene, believing it to be cleaner to eat them than to crush them between their nails. They eat any wild plant that does not smell bad to them, and thus they know much about medicinal plants, and their natural qualities. Their main nourishment is centli and chile, and their usual drink water or *atolli*.

[Chapter 227]. Of Wine and Drunkenness

The Mexica do not make wine from grapes, although there are grapevines in many parts, and it is admirable that, since there are grape vine stocks and they prefer other drinks to water, they have not planted vines or made wine from grapes. The best, most fragrant, and expensive drink they have is made from cacao powder and water. Sometimes they mix honey and flour from legumes with it. This drink does not cause drunkenness, but is very refreshing and, for this reason, they drink it when they are hot and perspiring. They make wine from maize, which is their wheat, with water and honey. It is called atolli, and it is a very common beverage everywhere. It can also be made from any of their seeds, and does not intoxicate. They cook it or prepare it with some wild plants or roots. During regular meals, they are satisfied with these drinks and even with water, which is sufficient to live on. For childbirth, weddings, and sacrificial festivities, however, they prefer inebriating drinks that make them lose control.

For this kind of drink they mix in certain wild plants that, either because of their evil juice or their pestiferous smell, cause them to lose their minds even more than the pure wine from San Martín.[508] No one can stand their bad breath, or the desire they have to fight and kill their companions. When they wish to become truly intoxicated, they eat raw mushrooms called *teonanacatl*, or "flesh of the gods," and due to the mushroom's bitterness, they drink quantities of honey water or their common wine, and in a short time they are completely mindless, as they see snakes, tigers, caymans, and fish that swallow them, and have many other frightening visions. It seems to them that they are being eaten alive by worms; like rabid dogs, they look for someone to kill them or they hang themselves. They steep wormwood in water and [LdeG: ground] chia, which is like fleawort, to make a slightly bitter wine that many drink without tasting its bitterness. They bore palms

508. The reference is to the wine from San Martín de Valdeiglesias, famous for its quality and enjoyed by the Spanish nobility. Its therapeutic value is extolled in the study by Philip II's physican, Cristóbal de Vega, *Liber de arte medendi*, vol. 2 (Lyon, 1564), 200.

and other trees to drink their sap: they drink the liquor distilled from a tree called metl, boiled with *ocpahtli*,[509] a root which, because of its benefits, is called "wine medicine." It is not at all beneficial but harmful, and intoxicates terribly. I know of no dead dog or vomit that smells worse than the breath of those inebriated from that wine.

Those intoxicated on occasions other than public holidays and reunions authorized by the lords or judges are shorn in the center of the square, and their houses razed, since those who lose control because of liquor do not deserve to live among rational men. They drink to become mad and, becoming mad, kill others, and sleep indiscriminately with their daughters, mother, and sisters. This punishment is small for such an immense evil. After becoming Christians, they drink our wine, as they prefer it to theirs. To keep them from their drunken habit, they are sentenced to be slaves [LdeG: selling them for 4 or 5 reales] for one month.

(f. 171v) [Chapter 228]. On Slaves

I would like to explain the Mexica system of slavery, because it is different from ours. Captives taken in war did not serve as slaves, but were sacrificed, and all they did was eat so they would be eaten. The fathers could sell their sons as slaves, and each man and woman could sell him- or herself. The sale of oneself was carried out before at least four witnesses.

If unable to pay, the thief who stole maize, clothes, or hens was made a slave and turned over to the affected party. If after becoming a slave the person again stole, he was either hanged or sacrificed.

The man who sold a free man as a slave was himself given over as a slave to the one he had sold, and this law was carefully kept so that children would not be sold or eaten. The Mexica would take as slaves the children and relatives of traitors, or those who knew of them. The free man who slept with a slave and impregnated her became the slave of the female slave's owner, although some disagree with this, since the male slaves would frequently marry their mistresses and the female slaves, their lords. But in cases of marriage the pregnancy was legal and did not dishonor the lord or the female slave.[510]

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509. Molina, 75v, 80, has *octli*, "vino," and *patli*, "medicina." We have not been able to identify this particular root, but for examples in which octli is used as the base for assorted remedies, see Martín de la Cruz, *Libellus de Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis*, trans. Juan Badiano ([Xochimilco, 1552], México, 1991), 2 vols., 55r, 57v, 65r.

510. The offspring would be legitimized, not the pregnancy.

Poor and shiftless men were sold, and gamblers were gambled as slaves, but they did not serve until one year after the sale.

Prostitutes who gave their bodies freely to men who would not pay were sold as slaves in order to be provided for or when unwanted because they were old, ugly, or infirm, so that they would not beg at doors.

Fathers who sold or pawned a child as a slave could redeem him if they gave another child. There were even family lineages that went into debt to maintain a slave, but the price for such a slave was very high. When one died in debt, if there was no estate, the debtor took the child or the woman as a slave. Many say this was not true, but it could be that they resolved the situation in this way, as free men were permitted to sell themselves and fathers could sell their children.

No child of a male or female slave (who were more numerous) remained a slave, even though his mother and father were both slaves.

No one could sell his slave without first shackling the slave, and this could not be done without legal cause and authorization. The shackle was a ring of thin wood, like that on a yoke, which fit around the neck and came out at the nape with very long points that extended beyond the head so the shackled person could not free himself. These shackled slaves could be sacrificed. Slaves purchased from other nations could become free if they sought sanctuary at the palace (f. 172) on certain feast days of the year, and it is even said that only their owners or their owners' children could detain them, and if others did so, they became slaves and the slave remained free.

Each slave could have a woman and some property, with which they often freed themselves, although few ever bought their freedom, since they did not work much and were maintained by their owners.

[Chapter 229]. On Judges and Laws

The judges were twelve, all venerable men and nobles. They had income and towns appropriate to their position. They sat in judgment, but the appeals went to others.

[. . .][511]

511. C.'s manuscript copy concludes here, without completing LdeG's book. Twenty-three chapters remain, which include a description of Cortés, his death, a note by his heir don Martín Cortés, and Prince Philip's approbation at the very end of the book.

Glossary

A: Antilles
CM: Chontal Maya
N: Nahuatl
S: Spanish
YM: Yucatecan Maya

acalle N. *acalli*; water-house, canoe
acolli N. shoulder
adelantado S. in the context of overseas expansion, an honorific title given to commanders of conquering expeditions
aji A. chile pepper
alcaide S. warden
alcalde S. magistrate and *cabildo* member
alcalde mayor S. chief magistrate
alguacil S. town constable
almaizar S. Moorish headdress or veil
almirante S. admiral
almotacen S. inspector of weights and measures
altepetl N. kingdom, ethnic state
amillote N. *amilotl*; a type of whitefish
areito A. a type of dance
arenillas S. a type of dice
armada S. a Spanish naval fleet
arroba S. Spanish unit of weight equal to 11.502 kilograms, or 25.35 pounds
atl N. water
atolli N. more commonly called *atole*; a beverage made from a by-product of maize
atotolin N. pelicans

audiencia S. high court

ayotochtli N. armadillo

balcón S. balcony

balón S. ball

barbacoa S. corrupted form of the Antilles term for barbecue

braza S. linear unit of measure; commonly two *varas*, or 1.68 meters

brazada A unit of measure the length of two outstretched arms.

bubas S. skin lesions; possibly syphilis

caballería S. unit of agricultural land; approx. 105 acres

caballero S. horseman, knight, gentleman

cabecera S. head town

cabildo S. city, or town council

cacahuatl N. cacao beans; beans. The term is the source of *chocolate*, which was once *xocolatl* but has subsequently disappeared from Nahuatl.

cacao N. *cacahuatl*, cacao beans; see *cacahuatl*

cacique A. head man, chief, ruler. In central Mexico in the colonial period, it was the equivalent of *tlatoani*.

çahuatl N. epidemic disease, possibly smallpox; *huey çahuatl*: great rash; *çahuatl tepiton*: skin lesions, rash, possibly measles.

Calach Uni YM. possibly *Halach Uinic*, head man, or a rulership title

calli N. house

camellón S. flower bed; also used with the meaning of *chinampa*

carga S. Spanish unit of weight, generally two *fanegas*; approx. fifty pounds

castellano S. also *peso de oro*; Spanish monetary unit valued at 450 *maravedís*

caudillo S. leader

cédula S. royal decree

censo perpetuo S. rent option in perpetuity, often thought of as a mortgage

centli N. maize

chalchiuitl N. precious green stone

chía N. sage; *Salvia hispanica* or *Salvia columbariae*

chilli N. chile pepper

chilmolli N. chile sauce

chinampa N. raised aquatic field

chueca S. ball game

ciudad S. city

ciudadanos S. city dwellers

coçatli N. weasel

cochinilla S. a red dye from a type of crushed insect that feeds on the *nopal* cactus

comendador S. grantee in a military order

comendador mayor S. office in a military order just below *maestre*

comunero A member of a community; participant in the Castilian revolts of the 1520s

comunidad S. community

convento S. convent; friary

copalli N. incense

corregidor S. royal official who served as governor of a district

corregimiento S. civic district under the adminstration of a *corregidor*

cu YM. *ku*, deity, god. Later, the Spaniards adapted *cu*, or *cues,* to mean temple(s), pyramid(s)

cuartana S. four-day fever

cueitl N. skirt

cuitlachtli N. possibly a wolf; griffin

cutz YM. oscellated turkey

dedo S. finger; unit of measure the width of a finger

don S. honorific title for males

doña S. honorific title for females

ducado S. ducat; monetary unit worth 375 *maravedís*

encomendero S. possessor of an *encomienda*

encomienda S. the grant of natives for labor and tribute purposes

escopeta S. The predecessor of the *arcabuz*, a weapon held in the hand; it meant shotgun later.

escopetero S. musketeer; specialist soldier who operated an *escopeta*

escribano S. notary

escribano de cabildo S. *cabildo* notary

estado S. linear measure equal to 1.67 meters

estancia S. section of land for livestock raising, or a subunit of an indigenous polity that is located at a distance from the *cabecera*, or the center of activity

factor S. royal treasury official in charge of most of the actual transactions of the treasury

fanega S. dry measure equal to approx. 1.6 bushels

faraúte S. interpreter

fundición S. foundry, smelter

gobernación S. government

guarnición S. garrison

heredamientos S. hereditary estates

hidalgo S. typically, someone of high social standing; on occasion, a member of the lower nobility

hucub YM. dugout canoe
huehuey atotolin N. American White Pelican
huehuetl N. standing cylindrical drum
huehuey N. large, grand
huey çahuatl N. a type of epidemic disease, possibly smallpox
huictli N. digging stick
huilotl N. dove
iguana A. iguana; a type of lizard
intérprete S. interpreter
juez de residencia S. presiding judge of a court or trial at the end of a term of office
justicia mayor S. chief justice
kutz YM. tobacco
latón S. brass
legua S. league; linear measure equal to 4.19 kilometers; a day's journey on horseback, which was reckoned as seven leagues
lengua S. interpreter
ligurón S. see *tiburón*
maçatl N. deer
macehualiztli N. a type of dance
macehualli N. commoner; *macehualtin*, pl.
maestre S. master, superior official in a military order
maestre de campo S. field or military commander
magrillas S. a small *nochtli*
malli N. captive
manta S. length of cloth
maravedí S. Spanish currency; 34 *maravedís* equaled one *real*, and 275 *maravedís* equaled a piece of eight
marco S. a weight for metals, primarily silver, equivalent to eight ounces, or 230.45 grams
mayoral S. overseer
mayordomo S. steward
metl N. maguey
modorra S. profound stupor
montesinas S. *nochtli* in the wild
morisco/a S. in Spain, a convert to Christianity from Islam; in the Americas, a *morisca* was the daughter of a European and a mulata
nahuatlatoque N. interpreters
nao S. a fully decked vessel, larger than a caravel
nequen N. *nequametl*; a type of maguey or palm tree

netotoliztli N. *netotiliztli*, a dance
nezahualiztli N. fasting
nochiztli N. *nocheztli*, scarlet dye in granular form, cochineal
nochtli N. fruit of a type of cactus
nopal N. *nopalli*; a type of cactus
oidor S. judge of the high court
ollamaliztli N. a type of ball game
olli N. sap from a rubber tree, also used to form a ball
olmaitl N. rubber-tipped drumstick
palmito S. a type of palm tree
palmo S. linear unit of measure reckoned variously; approx. one-fourth of a *vara*
paloma S. dove, possibly a pigeon
parcialidad S. sub-*altepetl*; one half of an *altepetl* in dual organization
particular S. private person, individual
paso S. a distance of approximately three feet
patoliztli N. board game
patolli N. dice; a game of chance
peso S. Spanish monetary unit equal to 28.7 grams, eight *reales*; 450 *maravedís* equal one *castellano*, or *peso de oro*, which is divided into eight *tomines*, or *reales*
peso de oro S. also *castellano*; Spanish monetary unit valued at 450 *maravedís*
pilli N. noble
pochteca N. merchants
principal S. prominent person in a town
procurador S. solicitor
quauhcuetzpalli N. iguana
quauhcuezpaltepec N. on the mountain of the iguana; a Popolucan town
quetzalcuitlachtli N. a griffin-like creature
quetzalli N. beautiful green feather
quintal S. unit of weight equal to 100 kilograms, or 220.46 pounds
quinto S. royal fifth
real S. Spanish monetary unit equal to one-eighth of a *peso*
real de ocho S. Spanish monetary unit worth approx. 275 *maravedís*; later known as the *peso*
real de plata S. Spanish monetary unit equal to 34 *maravedís*
regidor S. city, or town councilman
relación S. account, chronicle
repartidor S. distributor of *encomiendas*

repartimiento S. in the encounters-conquest era: *encomienda*; in Chimalpahin's time: labor draft

repartimiento de indios S. labor draft of natives

requerimiento S. requirement; instruction; a claim on a territory or people on behalf of the Spanish crown

residencia S. investigation into the conduct of affairs of an official at the conclusion of his term of office

señor S. honorific title; lord, sir

señora S. honorific title; lady

sujeto S. subject town

tahucup CM. *ta hucub*; in the little boat

tamal, tamale N. *tamalli*; a rolled, filled, steamed maize preparation

tameme N. *tlamama* or *tlameme*; porter

tecpan N. palace

temazcalli N. sweat bath

templo mayor S. great temple

teocalli N. temple

teoquecholli N. roseate spoonbill

teotl N. god, deity

teoxalli N. possibly *texalli*, or sandstone, used to sharpen tools

teponaztli N. hollow, wooden drum with two musical tones

tesorero real S. crown treasurer

tetl N. stone

teuhctli N. C.'s spelling of *teuctli*; lord

texamatl N. a type of finished paper

texcalla[n] N. rocky, craggy place

tezonzapotl N. *teçontzapotl*; a type of fruit tree, possibly related to the sapodilla tree

tianquiztli N. market

tiburón S. shark

tlachtli N. place where a ball game was played

tlamacazqui N. priest

tlaquatl N. opossum

tlatelli N. small hill; earthen mound

tlatoani N. ruler, speaker, king

tlaxilacalli N. constituent district of an *altepetl*

tocatl N. spider

tolli N. reed

tuna S. prickly pear fruit from a type of cactus

tuza N. *toçan*; gopher

tzacotli N. *tzacuçolli*; something stuck with paste or glue

-tzin N. reverential suffix

vara S. linear unit of measure equal to 0.84 meter; approx. 33 inches

vecino S. resident, citizen, head of household, neighbor

veedor S. inspector

villa S. municipal corporation

visitador S. inspector

volador S. flier; native dancer who descends from a tall pole attached by a rope, circling the pole

xagua N. *xaualli*; body paint

xalli N. sand

xaman YM. north

xeme S. *jeme* is the modern Spanish spelling of *xeme*; the distance between the tips of the thumb and index finger when both are fully extended; approx. six inches

xouille N. *xouilin*; a type of fish

zacatl N. straw, grass

Sources: Victoria Bricker, personal communication (June 2007); Covarrubias (1994); *DA* (1990); Gibson (1964); James Lockhart, personal communication (December 2008); Lockhart, Berdan, and Anderson (1986); Molina (1970); Pérez de Ribas (1999); *Real Academía Española* (1992); Sahagún (1963, 1975); Santamaría (1992); Siméon (1977); Simpson (1964); and Thomas (1993).

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